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From Vienna

To
Anna

Dec 25, 1884



THE LITERARY LIFE.

EDITED BY WILLIAM SHEPARD.

EXTRA CLOTH, GILT TOP, \$1 25 PER VOLUME.

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THE LITERARY LIFE

Edited by
WILLIAM SHEPARD

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Pen Pictures
OF
Earlier Victorian Authors

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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CHAPTER I.

LITERARY LONDON IN 1835.

N. P. Willis and his "Pencilings by the Way"—Lady Blessington and her coterie—Bulwer and D'Israeli in their younger days—A group of literary lions.

IN the spring of 1835 (just two years before the accession of Queen Victoria to the British throne) a young American, travelling in England, had succeeded, by reason of some transatlantic reputation as a poet, in obtaining a foothold in the literary society of London. He improved the opportunity by sending "pen pictures" of the celebrities whom he encountered to a New York journal with which he was connected. These sketches were gathered together, with other matter of a similar nature, and published in London in book form, in the same year. They made a great noise there, and brought down much abuse upon their author, who was accused of having taken liberties with names and personalities which were unwarrantable in the case of living characters. That

young man was Mr. N. P. Willis, and the title of his book was "Pencilings by the Way." As Mr. Willis and his books have together sunk into oblivion, as the passages which made so much stir in their day are known only to the curious in this age, as the death of all persons concerned has rendered their resurrection harmless, and (to come more directly to the point) as these passages give very interesting glimpses of English literary society as it was constituted at about the time that her present Majesty commenced to reign, I have thought that I could not begin the present volume better than by quoting these forgotten sketches by Mr. Willis.

WILLIS' SKETCHES OF LITERARY LONDON.

A friend in Italy had kindly given me a letter to Lady Blessington, and with a strong curiosity to see this celebrated lady, I called on the second day after my arrival in London. It was "deep i' the afternoon," but I had not yet learned the full meaning of "town hours." "Her ladyship had not come down to breakfast." I gave the letter and my address to the powdered footman, and had scarce reached home when a note arrived inviting me to call the same evening at ten.

In a long library lined alternately with splendidly bound books and mirrors, and with a deep window


of the breadth of the room, opening upon Hyde Park, I found Lady Blessington alone. The picture to my eye as the door opened was a very lovely one. A woman of remarkable beauty, half buried in a fau-teuil of yellow satin, reading by a magnificent lamp suspended from the centre of the arched ceiling ; sofas, couches, ottomans, and busts, arranged in rather a crowded sumptuousness through the room ; enamel tables, covered with expensive and elegant trifles in every corner, and a delicate white hand relieved on the back of a book, to which the eye was attracted by the blaze of its diamond rings. As the servant mentioned my name, she rose and gave me her hand very cordially, and a gentleman entering immediately after, she presented me to her son-in-law, Count D'Orsay, the well-known Pelham of London, and certainly the most splendid specimen of a man, and a well-dressed one, that I had ever seen. Tea was brought in immediately, and conversation went swimmingly on.

Her ladyship's inquiries were principally about America, of which, from long absence, I knew very little. She was extremely curious to know the degrees of reputation the present popular authors of England enjoy among us, particularly Bulwer, Galt, and D'Israeli (the author of " Vivian Grey "). " If you will come to-morrow night," she said, " you will see Bulwer. I am delighted that he is popular in America. He is envied and abused by all the

literary men in London, for nothing, I believe, except that he gets five hundred pounds for his books and they fifty, and knowing this, he chooses to assume a pride (some people call it puppyism) which is only the armor of a sensitive mind afraid of a wound. He is to his friends the most frank and gay creature in the world, and open to boyishness with those who he thinks understand and value him. He has a brother Henry, who is as clever as himself in a different vein, and is just now publishing a book on the present state of France. Bulwer's wife, you know, is one of the most beautiful women in London, and his house is the resort of both fashion and talent. He is just now hard at work on a new book, the subject of which is the last days of Pompeii. The hero is a Roman dandy, who wastes himself in luxury, till this great catastrophe rouses him and develops a character of the noblest capabilities. Is Galt much liked?"

I answered to the best of my knowledge that he was not. His life of Byron was a stab at the dead body of the noble poet, which, for one, I never could forgive, and his books were clever, but vulgar. He was evidently not a gentleman in his mind. This was the opinion I had formed in America, and I never heard another.

"I am sorry for it," said Lady B., "for he is the dearest and best old man in the world. I know him well. He is just on the verge of the grave, but



comes to see me now and then, and if you had known how shockingly Byron treated him you would only wonder at his sparing his memory so much."

"*Nil mortuis nisi bonum*," I thought would have been a better course. If he had reason to dislike him, he had better not have written since he was dead.

"Perhaps—perhaps. But Galt has been all his life miserably poor, and lived by his books. That must be his apology. Do you know the D'Israeli in America?"

I assured her ladyship that the "Curiosities of Literature," by the father, and "Vivian Grey" and "Contarini Fleming," by the son, were universally known.

"I am pleased at that, too, for I like them both. D'Israeli the elder came here with his son the other night. It would have delighted you to see the old man's pride in him. He is very fond of him, and as he was going away, he patted him on the head, and said to me: "Take care of him, Lady Blessington, for my sake. He is a clever lad, but he wants ballast. I am glad he has the honor to know you, for you will check him sometimes when I am away!" D'Israeli the elder lives in the country, about twenty miles from town, and seldom comes up to London. He is a very plain old man in his manners, as plain as his son is the reverse. D'Israeli the younger is quite his own character of Vivian Grey,

crowded with talent, but very *soigné* of his curls, and a bit of a coxcomb. There is no reserve about him, however, and he is the only *joyous* dandy I ever saw."

I asked if the account I had seen in some American paper of a literary celebration at Canandaigua, and the engraving of her ladyship's name with some others upon a rock, was not a quiz.

"Oh, by no means. I was equally flattered and amused by the whole affair. I have a great idea of taking a trip to America to see it. Then the letter, commencing 'Most charming Countess—for charming you must be since you have written the conversations of Lord Byron'—oh, it was quite delightful. I have shown it to everybody. By the way, I receive a great many letters from America, from people I never heard of, written in the most extraordinary style of compliment, apparently in perfectly good faith. I hardly know what to make of them."

I accounted for it by the perfect seclusion in which great numbers of cultivated people live in our country, who, having neither intrigue, nor fashion, nor twenty other things to occupy their minds as in England, depend entirely upon books, and consider an author who has given them pleasure as a friend. America, I said, has probably more literary enthusiasts than any country in the world; and there are thousands of romantic minds in the

interior of New England, who know perfectly every writer this side the water, and hold them all in an affectionate veneration, scarcely conceivable by a sophisticated European. If it were not for such readers, literature would be the most thankless of vocations. I, for one, would never write another line.

“And do you think these are the people who write to me? If I could think so, I should be exceedingly happy. People in England are refined down to such heartlessness—criticism, private and public, is so interested and so cold, that it is really delightful to know there is a more generous tribunal. Indeed, I think all our authors now are beginning to write for America. We think already a great deal of your praise or censure.”

I asked if her ladyship had known many Americans.

“Not in London, but a great many abroad. I was with Lord Blessington in his yacht at Naples, when the American fleet was lying there, eight or ten years ago, and we were constantly on board your ships. I knew Commodore Creighton and Captain Deacon extremely well, and liked them particularly. They were with us, either on board the yacht or the frigate, every evening, and I remember very well the band playing always “God save the King!” as we went up the side. Count D’Orsay here, who spoke very little English at that time, had a great passion

for Yankee Doodle, and it was always played at his request."

The Count, who still speaks the language with a very slight accent, but with a choice of words which shows him to be a man of uncommon tact and elegance of mind, inquired after several of the officers, whom I have not the pleasure of knowing. He seemed to remember his visits to the frigate with great pleasure. The conversation, after running upon a variety of topics, which I could not with propriety put into a letter for the public eye, turned very naturally upon Byron. I had frequently seen the Countess Guiccioli on the Continent, and I asked Lady Blessington if she knew her.

"No. We were at Pisa when they were living together, but, though Lord Blessington had the greatest curiosity to see her, Byron would never permit it. 'She has a red head of her own,' said he, 'and don't like to show it.' Byron treated the poor creature dreadfully ill. She feared more than she loved him."

She had told me the same thing herself in Italy.

It would be impossible, of course, to make a full and fair record of a conversation of some hours. I have only noted one or two topics which I thought most likely to interest an American reader. During all this long visit, however, my eyes were very busy in finishing for memory a portrait of the celebrated and beautiful woman before me.

The portrait of Lady Blessington in the "Book of Beauty" is not unlike her, but it is still an unfavorable likeness. A picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence hung opposite me, taken perhaps at the age of eighteen, which is more like her, and as captivating a representation of a just matured woman, full of loveliness and love, the kind of creature with whose divine sweetness the gazer's heart aches, as ever was drawn in the painter's most inspired hour. The original is now (she confesses it very frankly) forty. She looks something on the sunny side of thirty. Her person is full, but preserves all the fineness of an admirable shape; her foot is not crowded in a satin slipper for which a Cinderella might long be looked for in vain; and her complexion (an unusually fair skin, with very dark hair and eyebrows) is of even a girlish delicacy and freshness. Her dress of blue satin (if I am describing her like a milliner, it is because I have here and there a reader of the *Mirror* in my eye who will be amused by it) was cut low and folded across her bosom in a way to show to advantage the round and sculpture-like curve and whiteness of a pair of exquisite shoulders, while her hair, dressed close to her head, and parted simply on her forehead with a rich *ferronière* of turquoise, enveloped in a clear outline a head with which it would be difficult to find a fault. Her features are regular, and her mouth, the most expressive of them, has a ripe ful-

ness and freedom of play, peculiar to the Irish physiognomy, and expressive of the most unsuspecting good-humor. Add to all this a voice merry and sad by turns, but always musical, and manners of the most unpretending elegance, yet even more remarkable for their winning kindness, and you have the most prominent traits of one of the most lovely and fascinating women I have ever seen. Remembering her talents and her rank, and the unenvying admiration she receives from the world of fashion and genius, it would be difficult to reconcile her lot to the "doctrine of compensation."

Spent my first day in London in wandering about the finest part of the West End. It is nonsense to compare it to any other city in the world. From the Horse-Guards to the Regent's Park alone there is more magnificence in architecture than in the whole of any other metropolis in Europe, and I have seen the most and the best of them. Yet this, though a walk of more than two miles, is but a small part even of the fashionable extremity of London. I am not easily tired in a city; but I walked till I could scarce lift my feet from the ground, and still the parks and noble streets extended before and around me as far as the eye could reach, and strange as they were in reality, the names were as familiar to me as if my childhood had been passed

among them. "Bond Street," "Grosvenor Square," "Hyde Park," look new to my eye, but they sound very familiar to my ear.

In the evening I kept my appointment with Lady Blessington. She had deserted her exquisite library for the drawing-room, and sat, in fuller dress, with six or seven gentlemen about her. I was presented immediately to all, and when the conversation was resumed, I took the opportunity to remark the distinguished coterie with which she was surrounded.

Nearest me sat *Smith*, the author of "Rejected Addresses"—a hale, handsome man, apparently fifty, with white hair, and a very nobly-formed head and physiognomy. His eye alone, small and with lids contracted into an habitual look of drollery, betrayed the bent of his genius. He held a cripple's crutch in his hand ; and though otherwise rather particularly well dressed, wore a pair of large India rubber shoes—the penalty he was paying, doubtless, for the many good dinners he had eaten. He played rather an *aside* in the conversation, whipping in with a quiz or a witticism whenever he could get an opportunity, but more a listener than a talker.

On the opposite side of Lady B. stood Henry Bulwer, the brother of the novelist, very earnestly engaged in a discussion of some speech of O'Connell's. He is said by many to be as talented as his brother, and has lately published a book on the present state of France. He is a small man, very

slight and gentlemanlike, a little pitted with the small-pox, and of very winning and persuasive manners. I liked him at the first glance.

His opponent in the argument was Fonblanque, the famous editor of the *Examiner*, said to be the best political writer of his day. I never saw a much worse face—sallow, seamed, and hollow, his teeth irregular, his skin livid, his straight black hair uncombed and straggling over his forehead—he looked as if he might be the gentleman

Whose “coat was red, and whose breeches were blue.”

A hollow, croaking voice, and a small fiery black eye, with a smile like a skeleton's, certainly did not improve his physiognomy. He sat upon his chair very awkwardly, and was very ill-dressed, but every word he uttered showed him to be a man of claims very superior to exterior attractions. The soft musical voice and elegant manner of the one, and the satirical, sneering tone and angular gestures of the other, were in very strong contrast.

A German prince, with a star on his breast, trying with all his might, but, from his embarrassed look, quite unsuccessfully, to comprehend the drift of the argument; the Duke de Richelieu, whom I had seen at the court of France, the inheritor of nothing but the name of his great ancestor, a dandy and a fool, making no attempt to listen; a famous traveller just returned from Constantinople; and

the splendid person of Count D'Orsay in a careless attitude upon the ottoman, completed the *cordon*.

I fell into conversation after a while with Smith, who, supposing I might not have heard the names of the others, in the hurry of an introduction, kindly took the trouble to play the dictionary, and added a graphic character of each as he named him. Among other things he talked a great deal of America, and asked me if I knew our distinguished countryman, Washington Irving. I had never been so fortunate as to meet him. "You have lost a great deal," he said, "for never was so delightful a fellow. I was once taken down with him into the country by a merchant, to dinner. Our friend stopped his carriage at the gate of his park, and asked us if we would walk through his grounds to the house. Irving refused, and held me down by the coat, so that we drove on to the house together, leaving our host to follow on foot. 'I make it a principle,' said Irving, 'never to walk with a man through his own grounds. I have no idea of praising a thing whether I like it or not. You and I will do them to-morrow morning by ourselves.'" The rest of the company had turned their attention to Smith as he began his story, and there was a universal inquiry after Mr. Irving. Indeed, the first questions on the lips of every one to whom I am introduced as an American, are of him and Cooper. The latter seems to me to be admired as much here

as abroad, in spite of a common impression that he dislikes the nation. No man's works could have higher praise in the general conversation that followed, though several instances were mentioned of his having shown an unconquerable aversion to the English when in England. Lady Blessington mentioned Mr. Bryant, and I was pleased at the immediate tribute paid to his delightful poetry by the talented circle around her.

Toward twelve o'clock, "Mr. Lytton Bulwer" was announced, and enter the author of "Pelham." I had made up my mind how he *should* look, and between prints and descriptions thought I could scarcely be mistaken in my idea of his person. No two things could be more unlike, however, than the ideal Mr. Bulwer in my mind and the real Mr. Bulwer who followed the announcement. *Imprimis*, the gentleman who entered was not handsome. I beg pardon of the boarding-schools—but he really *was not*. The engraving of him published some time ago in America is as much like any other man living, and gives you no idea of his head whatever. He is short, very much bent in the back, slightly knock-kneed, and, if my opinion in such matters goes for any thing, as ill-dressed a man, for a gentleman, as you will find in London. His figure is slight and very badly put together, and the only commendable point in his person, as far as I could see, was the smallest foot I ever saw a man stand

upon. *Au reste*, I liked his manners extremely. He ran up to Lady Blessington with the joyous heartiness of a boy let out of school ; and the "how d' ye, Bulwer !" went round, as he shook hands with everybody, in the style of welcome usually given to "the best fellow in the world." As I had brought a letter of introduction to him from a friend in Italy, Lady Blessington introduced me particularly, and we had a long conversation about Naples and its pleasant society.

Bulwer's head is, phrenologically, a fine one. His forehead retreats very much, but is very broad and well-marked, and the whole air is that of decided mental superiority. His nose is aquiline, and far too large for proportion, though he conceals its extreme prominence by an immense pair of red whiskers, which entirely conceal the lower part of his face in profile. His complexion is fair ; his hair profuse, curly, and of a light auburn ; his eye not remarkable ; and his mouth contradictory, I should think, of all talent. A more good-natured, habitually-smiling, nerveless expression could hardly be imagined. Perhaps my impression is an imperfect one, as he was in the highest spirits, and was not serious the whole evening for a minute—but it is strictly and faithfully *my impression*.

I can imagine no style of conversation calculated to be more agreeable than Bulwer's. Gay, quick, various, half satirical, and always fresh and differ-

ent from everybody else, he seemed to talk because he could not help it, and infected everybody with his spirits. I cannot give even the substance of it in a letter, for it was in a great measure local or personal. A great deal of fun was made of a proposal by Lady Blessington to take Bulwer to America and show him at so much a head. She asked me whether I thought it would be a good speculation. I took upon myself to assure her ladyship, that, provided she played *showman*, the "concern," as they would phrase it in America, would be certainly a profitable one. Bulwer said he would rather go in disguise and hear them abuse his books. It would be pleasant, he thought, to hear the opinions of people who judged him neither as a member of Parliament nor a dandy—simply a book-maker. Smith asked him if he kept an amanuensis. "No," he said, "I scribble it all out myself, and send it to the press in a most ungentlemanlike hand, half print and half hieroglyphic, with all its imperfections on its head, and correct in the proof—very much to the dissatisfaction of the publisher, who sends me in a bill of sixteen pounds six shillings and fourpence for extra corrections. Then I am free to confess I don't know grammar. Lady Blessington, do you know grammar? I detest grammar. There never was such a thing heard of before Lindley Murray. I wonder what they did for grammar before his day? Oh, the delicious blun-

ders one sees when they are irretrievable! And the best of it is, the critics never get hold of them. Thank Heaven for second editions, that one may scratch out his blots, and go down clean and gentlemanlike to posterity!" Smith asked him if he had ever reviewed one of his own books. "No—but I *could*! And then how I should like to recriminate and defend myself indignantly! I think I could be precious severe. Depend upon it, nobody knows a book's defects half so well as its author. I have a great idea of criticising my works for my posthumous memoirs. Shall I, Smith? Shall I, Lady Blessington?"

Bulwer's voice, like his brother's, is exceedingly lover-like and sweet. His playful tones are quite delicious, and his clear laugh is the soul of sincere and careless merriment.

It is quite impossible to convey, in a letter scrawled literally between the end of a late visit and a tempting pillow, the evanescent and pure spirit of a conversation of wits. I must confine myself, of course, in such sketches to the mere sentiment of things that concern general literature and ourselves.

"The Rejected Addresses" got upon his crutches about three o'clock in the morning, and I made my exit with the rest, thanking Heaven that, though in a strange country, my mother-tongue was the language of its men of genius.

Dined at Lady Blessington's, in company with several authors, three or four noblemen, and a clever exquisite or two. The authors were Bulwer, the novelist, and his brother, the statistician; Procter (better known as Barry Cornwall); D'Israeli, the author of "Vivian Grey"; and Fonblanque, of the *Examiner*. The principal nobleman was Lord Durham, and the principal exquisite (though the word scarce applies to the magnificent scale on which nature has made him, and on which he makes himself) was Count D'Orsay. There were plates for twelve.

I had never seen Procter, and, with my passionate love for his poetry, he was the person at table of the most interest to me. He came late, and as twilight was just darkening the drawing-room, I could only see that a small man followed the announcement, with a remarkably timid manner, and a very white forehead.

D'Israeli had arrived before me, and sat in the deep window, looking out upon Hyde Park, with the last rays of daylight reflected from the gorgeous gold flowers of a splendidly embroidered waistcoat. Patent-leather pumps, a white stick with a black cord and tassel, and a quantity of chains about his neck and pockets, served to make him, even in the dim light, rather a conspicuous object.

Bulwer was very badly dressed, as usual, and wore a flashy waistcoat of the same description as

D'Israeli's. Count D'Orsay was very splendid, but very undefinable. He seemed showily dressed till you looked to particulars, and then it seemed only a simple thing well fitted to a very magnificent person. Lord Albert Conyngham was a dandy of common materials ; and my Lord Durham, though he looked a young man, if he passed for a lord at all in America, would pass for a very ill-dressed one.

For Lady Blessington, she is one of the most handsome, and quite the best-dressed woman in London ; and, without further description, I trust the readers of the *Mirror* will have little difficulty in imagining a scene that, taking a wild American into the account, was made up of rather various material.

The blaze of lamps on the dinner-table was very favorable to my curiosity, and as Procter and D'Israeli sat directly opposite me, I studied their faces to advantage. Barry Cornwall's forehead and eye are all that would strike you in his features. His brows are heavy; and his eye, deeply sunk, has a quick, restless fire, that would have arrested my attention, I think, had I not known he was a poet. His voice has the huskiness and elevation of a man more accustomed to think than converse, and it was never heard except to give a brief and very condensed opinion, or an illustration, admirably to the point, of the subject under discussion. He evi-

dently felt that he was only an observer in the party.

D'Israeli has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and but for the energy of his action and the strength of his lungs, would seem a victim to consumption. His eye is black as Erebus, and has the most mocking and lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. His mouth is alive with a kind of working and impatient nervousness, and when he has burst forth, as he does constantly, with a particularly successful cataract of expression, it assumes a curl of triumphant scorn that would be worthy of a Mephistopheles. His hair is as extraordinary as his taste in waist-coats. A thick heavy mass of jet-black ringlets falls over his left cheek almost to his collarless stock, while on the right temple it is parted and put away with the smooth carefulness of a girl's, and shines most unctuously

“ With thy incomparable oil, Macassar ! ”

The anxieties of the first course, as usual, kept every mouth occupied for a while, and then the dandies led off with a discussion of Count D'Orsay's rifle match (he is the best rifle shot in England), and various matters as uninteresting to transatlantic readers. The new poem, “ Philip Van Artevelde,” came up after a while, and was very much overpraised (*me judice*). Bulwer said, that as the author

was the principal writer for the *Quarterly Review*, it was a pity it was first praised in that periodical, and praised so unqualifiedly. Procter said nothing about it, and I respected his silence ; for, as a poet, he must have felt the poverty of the poem, and was probably unwilling to attack a new aspirant in his laurels.

The next book discussed was Beckford's Italy, or rather the next author, for the *writer* of "Vathek" is more original and more talked of than his books, and just now occupies much of the attention of London. Mr. Beckford has been all his life enormously rich, has luxuriated in every country with the fancy of a poet and the refined splendor of a Sybarite, was the admiration of Lord Byron, who visited him at Cintra, was the owner of Fonthill, and, *plus fort encore*, his is one of the oldest families in England. What could such a man attempt that would not be considered extraordinary !

D'Israeli was the only one at table who knew him, and the style in which he gave a sketch of his habits and manners was worthy of himself. I might as well attempt to gather up the foam of the sea, as to convey an idea of the extraordinary language in which he clothed his description. There were at least five words in every sentence that must have been very much astonished at the use they were put to, and yet no others, apparently, could so well have conveyed his idea. He talked

like a race-horse approaching the winning-post, every muscle in action, and the utmost energy of expression flung out in every burst. It is a great pity he is not in Parliament.*

The particulars he gave of Beckford, though stripped of his gorgeous digressions and parentheses, may be interesting. He lives now at Bath, where he has built a house on two sides of the street, connected by a covered bridge *à la Ponte de Sospiri* at Venice. His servants live on one side, and he and his sole companion on the other. This companion is a hideous dwarf, who imagines himself, or is, a Spanish duke; and Mr. Beckford for many years has supported him in a style befitting his rank, treats him with all the deference due to his title, and has, in general, no other society (I should not wonder, myself, if it turned out to be a woman); neither of them is often seen, and when in London, Mr. Beckford is only to be approached through his man of business. If you call, he is not at home. If you would leave a card or address him a note, his servant has strict orders not to take in any thing of the kind. At Bath, he has built a high tower, which is a great mystery to the inhabitants.

* I have been told that he stood once for a London borough. A coarse fellow came up at the hustings, and said to him, "I should like to know on what ground you stand here, sir?" "On my head, sir!" answered D'Israeli. The populace had not read "Vivian Grey," however, and he lost his election.

Around the interior, to the very top, it is lined with books, approachable by a light spiral staircase ; and in the pavement below, the owner has constructed a double crypt for his own body and that of his dwarf companion, intending, with a desire for human neighborhood which has not appeared in his life, to leave the library to the city, that all who enjoy it shall pass over the bodies below.

Mr. Beckford thinks very highly of his own books, and talks of his early production ("Vathek") in terms of unbounded admiration. He speaks slightly of Byron, and of his praise, and affects to despise utterly the popular taste. It appeared altogether, from D'Israeli's account, that he is a splendid egotist, determined to free life as much as possible from its usual fetters, and to enjoy it to the highest degree of which his genius, backed by an immense fortune, is capable. He is reputed, however, to be excessively liberal, and to exercise his ingenuity to contrive secret charities in his neighborhood.

Victor Hugo and his extraordinary novels came next under discussion ; and D'Israeli, who was fired with his own eloquence, started off, *apropos des bottes*, with a long story of an impalement he had seen in Upper Egypt. It was as good, and perhaps as authentic, as the description of the chow-chow-tow in "Vivian Grey." He had arrived at Cairo on the third day after the man was transfixed by two stakes from hip to shoulder, and he was still alive ! The

circumstantiality of the account was equally horrible and amusing. Then followed the sufferer's history, with a score of murders and barbarities, heaped together like Martin's Feast of Belshazzar, with a mixture of horror and splendor that was unparalleled in my experience of improvisation. No mystic priest of the Corybantes could have worked himself up into a finer frenzy of language.

Count D'Orsay kept up, through the whole of the conversation and narration, a running fire of witty parentheses, half French and half English; and with champagne in all the pauses, the hours flew on very dashingly. Lady Blessington left us toward midnight, and then the conversation took a rather political turn, and something was said of O'Connell. D'Israeli's lips were playing upon the edge of a champagne glass, which he had just drained, and off he shot again with a description of an interview he had with the agitator the day before, ending in a story of an Irish dragoon who was killed in the Peninsula. His name was Sarsfield. His arm was shot off, and he was bleeding to death. When told that he could not live, he called for a large silver goblet, out of which he usually drank his claret. He held it to the gushing artery and filled it to the brim with blood, looked at it a moment, turned it out slowly upon the ground, muttering to himself, "If that had been shed for old Ireland!" and expired. You can have no idea how thrillingly this little story was

told. Fonblanque, however, who is a cold political satirist, could see nothing in a man's "decaning his claret" that was in the least sublime, and so Vivian Grey got into a passion, and for a while was silent.

Bulwer asked me if there was any distinguished literary American in town. I said, Mr. Slidell, one of our best writers, was here.

"Because," said he, "I received, a week or more ago, a letter of introduction by some one from Washington Irving. It lay on the table, when a lady came in to call on my wife, who seized upon it as an autograph, and immediately left town, leaving me with neither name nor address."

There was a general laugh and a cry of "Pelham! Pelham!" as he finished his story. Nobody chose to believe it.

'I think the name *was* Slidell," said Bulwer.

"Slidell!" said D'Israeli, "I owe him twopence, by Jove!" and he went on in his dashing way to narrate that he had sat next Mr. Slidell at a bull-fight in Seville, that he wanted to buy a fan to keep off the flies, and having nothing but doubloons in his pocket, Mr. S. had lent him a small Spanish coin to that value, which he owed him to this day.

There was another general laugh, and it was agreed that on the whole the Americans were "*done*."

Apropos to this, D'Israeli gave us a description, in a gorgeous, burlesque, galloping style, of a Span-

ish bull-fight ; and when we were nearly dead with laughing at it, some one made a move, and we went up to Lady Blessington in the drawing-room. Lord Durham requested her ladyship to introduce him, particularly, to D'Israeli (the effect of his eloquence). I sat down in the corner with Sir Martin Shee, the President of the Royal Academy, and had a long talk about Allston and Harding and Cole, whose pictures he knew ; and " somewhere in the small hours " we took our leave, and Procter left me at my door in Cavendish Street, weary, but in a better humor with the world than usual.

Went to the opera to hear Giulia Grisi. I stood out the first act in the pit, and saw instances of rudeness in " Fop's-alley " which I had never seen approached in three years on the Continent. The high price of tickets, one would think, and the necessity of appearing in full dress, would keep the opera clear of low-bred people ; but the conduct to which I refer seemed to excite no surprise and passed off without notice, though, in America, there would have been ample matter for at least four duels.

Grisi is young, very pretty, and an admirable actress—three great advantages to a singer. Her voice is under absolute command, and she manages it beautifully, but it wants the infusion of Malibran. You merely feel that Grisi is an accomplished artist,

while Malibran melts all your criticism into love and admiration. I am easily moved by music, but I came away without much enthusiasm for the present passion of London.

The opera-house is very different from those on the Continent. The stage only is lighted abroad, the single lustre from the ceiling just throwing that *clair-obscur* over the boxes, so favorable to Italian complexions and morals. Here, the dress circles are lighted with bright chandeliers, and the whole house sits in such a blaze of light as leaves no approach, even to a lady, unseen. The consequence is that people here dress much more, and the opera, if less interesting to the *habitué*, is a gayer thing to the many.

I went up to Lady Blessington's box for a moment, and found Strangways, the traveller, and several other distinguished men with her. Her ladyship pointed out to me Lord Brougham, flirting desperately with a pretty woman on the opposite side of the house, his mouth going with the convulsive twitch which so disfigures him, and his most unsightly of pug-noses in the strongest relief against the red lining behind. There never was a plainer man. The Honorable Mrs. Norton, Sheridan's daughter, and a poetess, sat nearer to us, looking like a queen, certainly one of the most beautiful women I ever looked upon ; and the gastronomic and hump-backed Lord Sefton, said to be the best judge of

cookery in the world, sat in the "dandy's omnibus," a large box on a level with the stage, leaning forward with his chin on his knuckles, and waiting with evident impatience for the appearance of Fanny Elssler in the *ballet*. Beauty and all, the English opera-house surpasses any thing I have seen in the way of a spectacle.

An evening party at Bulwer's. Not yet perfectly initiated in London hours, I arrived, not far from eleven, and found Mrs. Bulwer alone in her illuminated rooms, whiling away an expectant hour in playing with a King Charles spaniel, that seemed by his fondness and delight to appreciate the excessive loveliness of his mistress. As far off as America, I may express, even in print, an admiration which is no heresy in London.

The author of "Pelham" is a younger son and depends on his writings for a livelihood, and truly, measuring works of fancy by what they will bring (not an unfair standard perhaps), a glance around his luxurious and elegant rooms is worth reams of puff in the *Quarterlies*. He lives in the heart of the fashionable quarter of London, where rents are ruinously extravagant, entertains a great deal, and is expensive in all his habits, and for this pay Messrs. "Clifford," "Pelham," and "Aram"—(it would seem), most excellent good bankers. As I looked at the beautiful woman seated on the costly ottoman before me, waiting to receive the rank and fashion

of London, I thought that old close-fisted Literature never had better reason for his partial largess. I half forgave the miser for starving a wilderness of poets.

One of the first persons who came was Lord Byron's sister, a thin, plain, middle-aged woman, of a very serious countenance, and with very cordial and pleasing manners. The rooms soon filled, and two professed singers went industriously to work in their vocation at the piano; but, except one pale man, with staring hair, whom I took to be a poet, nobody pretended to listen.

Every second woman has some strong claim to beauty in England, and the proportion of those who just miss it, by a hair's breadth as it were—who seem really to have been meant for beauties by nature, but by a slip in the moulding or pencilling are imperfect copies of the design—is really extraordinary. One after another entered, as I stood near the door with my old friend Dr. Bowring for a nomenclator, and the word "lovely" or "charming" had not passed my lips before some change in the attitude or unguarded animation had exposed the flaw, and the hasty homage (for homage it is, and an idolatrous one, that we pay to the beauty of woman) was coldly and unsparingly retracted. From a goddess upon earth to a slighted and unattractive trap for matrimony is a long step, but taken on so slight a defect sometimes, as, were they marble, a sculptor would etch away with his nail.

I was surprised (and I have been struck with the same thing at several parties I have attended in London) at the neglect with which the female part of the assemblage is treated. No young man ever seems to dream of speaking to a lady, except to ask her to dance. There they sit with their mammas, their hands hung over each other before them in the received attitude ; and if there happens to be no dancing (as at Bulwer's), looking at a print, or eating an ice, is for them the most enlivening circumstance of the evening. As well as I recollect, it is better managed in America, and certainly society is quite another thing in France and Italy. Late in the evening a charming girl, who is the reigning belle of Naples, came in with her mother from the opera, and I made the remark to her. "I detest England for that very reason," she said frankly. "It is the fashion in London for the young men to prefer every thing to the society of women. They have their clubs, their horses, their rowing matches, their hunting and betting, and every thing else is a *bore* ! How different are the same men at Naples ! They can never get enough of one there ! We are surrounded and run after,

" ' Our poodle dog is quite adored,
Our sayings are extremely quoted,'

and really one feels that one *is* a belle." She mentioned several of the beaux of last winter who had

returned to England. "Here I have been in London a month, and these very men that were dying for me, at my side every day on the *Strada Nuova*, and all but fighting to dance three times with me of an evening, have only left their cards! Not because they care less about me, but because it is 'not the fashion'—it would be talked of at the club, it is 'knowing' to let us alone."

There were only three men in the party, which was a very crowded one, who could come under the head of *beaux*. Of the remaining part, there was much that was distinguished, both for rank and talent. Sheil, the Irish orator, a small, dark, deceitful, but talented-looking man, with a very disagreeable squeaking voice, stood in a corner, very earnestly engaged in conversation with the aristocratic old Earl of Clarendon. The contrast between the styles of the two men, the courtly and mild elegance of the one, and the uneasy and half-bred but shrewd earnestness of the other, was quite a study. Fonblanque, of the *Examiner*, with his pale and dislocated-looking face, stood in the door-way between the two rooms, making the amiable with a ghastly smile to Lady Stepney. The "bilious Lord Durham," as the papers call him, with his Brutus head, and grave, severe countenance, high-bred in his appearance, despite the worst possible coat and trousers, stood at the pedestal of a beautiful statue, talking politics with Bowring;

and near them, leaned over a chair, the Prince Moscowa, the son of Marshal Ney, a plain, but determined-looking young man, with his coat buttoned up to his throat, unconscious of every thing but the presence of the Hon. Mrs. Leicester Stanhope, a very lovely woman, who was enlightening him, in the prettiest English French, upon some point of national differences. Her husband, famous as Lord Byron's companion in Greece, and a great liberal in England, was introduced to me soon after by Bulwer ; and we discussed the Bank and the President, with a little assistance from Bowring, who joined us with a pæan for the old general and his measures, till it was far into the morning.

I am obliged to "gazette" Lady Blessington rather more than I should wish, and more than may seem delicate to those who do not know the central position she occupies in the circle of talent in London. Her soirées and dinner-parties, however, are literally the single and only assemblages of men of genius, without reference to party—the only attempt at a republic of letters in the world of this great, envious, and gifted metropolis. The pictures of literary life, in which my countrymen would be most interested, therefore, are found within a very small compass, presuming them to prefer the brighter side of an eminent character, and presuming them (*is* it a presumption?) not to

possess that appetite for degrading the author to the man, by an anatomy of his secret personal failings, which is lamentably common in England. Having premised thus much, I go on with my letter.

I drove to Lady Blessington's an evening or two since, with the usual certainty of finding her at home, as there was no opera, and the equal certainty of finding a circle of agreeable and eminent men about her. She met me with the information that Moore was in town, and an invitation to dine with her whenever she should be able to prevail upon "the little Bacchus" to give her a day. D'Israeli the younger was there, and Dr. Beattie, the king's physician (and author, unacknowledged, of "The Heliotrope"), and one or two fashionable young noblemen.

Moore was naturally the first topic. He had appeared at the opera the night before, after a year's ruralizing at "Slopperton cottage," as fresh and young and witty as he ever was known in his youth—(for Moore must be sixty at least). Lady B. said the only difference she could see in his appearance was the loss of his curls, which once justified singularly his title of Bacchus, flowing about his head in thin, glossy, elastic tendrils, unlike any other hair she had ever seen, and comparable to nothing but the rings of the vine. He is now quite bald, and the change is very

striking. D'Israeli regretted that he should have been met, exactly on his return to London, with the savage but clever article in *Fraser's Magazine* on his plagiarisms. "Give yourself no trouble about that," said Lady B., "for you may be sure he will never see it. Moore guards against the sight and knowledge of criticism as people take precautions against the plague. He reads few periodicals, and but one newspaper. If a letter comes to him from a suspicious quarter, he burns it unopened. If a friend mentions a criticism to him at the club, he never forgives him; and so well is this understood among his friends, that he might live in London a year, and all the magazines might dissect him, and he would probably never hear of it. In the country he lives on the estate of Lord Lansdowne, his patron and best friend, with half a dozen other noblemen within a dinner-drive; and he passes his life in this exclusive circle, like a bee in amber, perfectly preserved from every thing that could blow rudely upon him. He takes the world *en philosophe*, and is determined to descend to his grave perfectly ignorant if such things as critics exist." Somebody said this was weak, and D'Israeli thought it was wise, and made a splendid defence of his opinion, as usual, and I agreed with D'Israeli. Moore deserves a medal, as the happiest author of his day, to possess the power.

A remark was made in rather a satirical tone,

upon Moore's worldliness and passion for rank. "He was sure," it was said, "to have four or five invitations to dine on the same day, and he tormented himself with the idea that he had not accepted perhaps the most exclusive. He would get off from an engagement with a Countess to dine with a Marchioness, and from a Marchioness to accept the later invitation of a Duchess ; and as he cared little for the society of men, and would sing and be delightful only for the applause of women, it mattered little whether one circle was more talented than another. Beauty was one of his passions, but rank and fashion were all the rest." This rather left-handed portrait was confessed by all to be just, Lady B. herself making no comment upon it. She gave, as an offset, however, some particulars of Moore's difficulties from his West Indian appointment, which left a balance to his credit.

"Moore went to Jamaica with a profitable appointment. The climate disagreed with him, and he returned home, leaving the business in the hands of a confidential clerk, who embezzled eight thousand pounds in the course of a few months and absconded. Moore's politics had made him obnoxious to the Government, and he was called to account with unusual severity ; while Theodore Hook, who had been recalled at this very time from some foreign appointment, for a deficit of twenty thousand pounds in his accounts, was never mo-

lest, being of the ruling party. Moore's misfortune awakened a great sympathy among his friends. Lord Lansdowne was the first to offer his aid. He wrote to Moore, that for many years he had been in the habit of laying aside from his income eight thousand pounds, for the encouragement of the arts and literature, and that he should feel that it was well disposed of for that year, if Moore would accept it, to free him from his difficulties. It was offered in the most delicate and noble manner, but Moore declined it. The members of "White's" (mostly noblemen) called a meeting, and (not knowing the amount of the deficit) subscribed in one morning twenty-five thousand pounds and wrote to the poet that they would cover the sum, whatever it might be. This was declined. Longman and Murray then offered to pay it, and wait for their remuneration from his works. He declined even this, and went to Passy with his family, where he economized and worked hard till it was cancelled."

This was certainly a story most creditable to the poet, and it was told with an eloquent enthusiasm that did the heart of the beautiful narrator infinite credit. I have given only the skeleton of it. Lady Blessington went on to mention another circumstance, very honorable to Moore, of which I had never before heard. "At one time two different counties of Ireland had sent committees to him,

to offer him a seat in Parliament, and, as he depended on his writings for a subsistence, offering him at the same time twelve hundred pounds a year, while he continued to represent them. Moore was deeply touched with it, and said no circumstance of his life had ever gratified him so much. He admitted that the honor they proposed him had been his most cherished ambition, but the necessity of receiving a pecuniary support at the same time was an insuperable obstacle. He could never enter Parliament with his hands tied, and his opinions and speech fettered, as they would be irresistibly in such circumstances." This does not sound like "jump-up-and-kiss-me Tom Moore," as the Irish ladies call him ; but her ladyship vouched for the truth of it. It was worthy of an old Roman.

By what transition I know not, the conversation turned on Platonism, and D'Israeli (who seemed to have remembered the shelf on which Vivian Grey was to find "the latter Platonists" in his father's library) "flared up," as a dandy would say, immediately. His wild black eyes glistened, and his nervous lip quivered and poured out eloquence ; and a German professor, who had entered late, and the Russian Chargé d'affaires, who had entered later, and a whole ottoman-full of noble exquisites, listened with wonder. He gave us an account of Taylor, almost the last of the celebrated Platonists, who worshipped Jupiter, in a back parlor in Lon-

don, a few years ago, with undoubted sincerity. He had an altar and a brazen figure of the Thunderer, and performed his devotions as regularly as the most pious *sacerdos* of the ancients. In his old age he was turned out of the lodgings he had occupied for a great number of years, and went to a friend in much distress to complain of the injustice. He had "only attempted to worship his gods according to the dictates of his conscience." "Did you pay your bills?" asked the friend. "Certainly." "Then what is the reason?" "His landlady had taken offence at his *sacrificing a bull to Jupiter in his back parlor!*"

The story sounded very Vivian-Greyish, and everybody laughed at it as a very good invention; but D'Israeli quoted his father as his authority, and it may appear in the "Curiosities of Literature"—where, however, it will never be so well told as by the extraordinary creature from whom we had heard it.

I called on Moore with a letter of introduction, and met him at the door of his lodgings. I knew him instantly from the pictures I had seen of him, but was surprised at the diminutiveness of his person. He is much below the middle size, and, with his white hat and long chocolate frock-coat, was far from prepossessing in his appearance. With this material disadvantage, however, his address is

gentlemanlike to a very marked degree, and I should think no one could see Moore without conceiving a strong liking for him. As I was to meet him at dinner, I did not detain him. In the moment's conversation that passed, he inquired very particularly after Washington Irving, expressing for him the warmest friendship, and asked what Cooper was doing.

I was at Lady Blessington's at eight. Moore had not arrived, but the other persons of the party—a Russian count, who spoke all the languages of Europe as well as his own ; a Roman banker, whose dynasty is more powerful than the pope's ; a clever English nobleman, and the “observed of all observers,” Count D'Orsay, stood in the window upon the park, killing, as they might, the melancholy twilight half-hour preceding dinner.

“Mr. Moore !” cried the footman at the bottom of the staircase. “Mr. Moore !” cried the footman at the top. And with his glass at his eye, stumbling over an ottoman between his nearsightedness and the darkness of the room, enter the poet. Half a glance tells you that he is at home on a carpet. Sliding his little feet up to Lady Blessington (of whom he was a lover when she was sixteen, and to whom some of the sweetest of his songs were written), he made his compliments, with a gayety and an ease combined with a kind of worshipping deference, that was worthy of a prime-minister at

the court of Love. With the gentlemen, all of whom he knew, he had the frank, merry manner of a confident favorite, and he was greeted like one. He went from one to the other, straining back his head to look up at them (for, singularly enough, every gentleman in the room was six feet high and upward), and to every one he said something which, from any one else, would have seemed peculiarly felicitous, but which fell from his lips as if his breath was not more spontaneous.

Dinner was announced, the Russian handed down "milady," and I found myself seated opposite Moore, with a blaze of light on his Bacchus head, and the mirrors, with which the superb octagonal room is panelled, reflecting every motion. To see him only at table, you would think him not a small man. His principal length is in his body, and his head and shoulders are those of a much larger person. Consequently he *sits tall*, and with the peculiar erectness of head and neck, his diminitiveness disappears.

The soup vanished in the busy silence that be-seems it, and as the courses commenced their procession, Lady Blessington led the conversation with the brilliancy and ease for which she is remarkable over all the women of her time. She had received from Sir William Gell, at Naples, the manuscript of a volume upon the last days of Sir Walter Scott. It was a melancholy chronicle of imbecility, and the

book was suppressed, but there were two or three circumstances narrated in its pages which were interesting. Soon after his arrival at Naples, Sir Walter went with his physician and one or two friends to the great museum. It happened that on the same day a large collection of students and Italian literati were assembled, in one of the rooms, to discuss some newly-discovered manuscripts. It was soon known that the "Wizard of the North" was there, and a deputation was sent immediately, to request him to honor them by presiding at their session. At this time Scott was a wreck, with a memory that retained nothing for a moment, and limbs almost as helpless as an infant's. He was dragging about among the relics of Pompeii, taking no interest in any thing he saw, when their request was made known to him through his physician. "No, no," said he, "I know nothing of their lingo. Tell them I am not well enough to come." He loitered on, and in about half an hour after, he turned to Dr. H. and said: "Who was that you said wanted to see me?" The doctor explained. "I'll go," said he; "they shall see me if they wish it"; and, against the advice of his friends, who feared it would be too much for his strength, he mounted the staircase, and made his appearance at the door. A burst of enthusiastic cheers welcomed him on the threshold, and forming in two lines, many of them on their knees, they seized his hands

as he passed, kissed them, thanked him in their passionate language for the delight with which he had filled the world, and placed him in the chair with the most fervent expressions of gratitude for his condescension. The discussion went on, but, not understanding a syllable of the language, Scott was soon wearied, and his friends observed it, pleaded the state of his health as an apology, and he rose to take his leave. These enthusiastic children of the South crowded once more around him, and with exclamations of affection and even tears, kissed his hands once more, assisting his tottering steps, and sent after him a confused murmur of blessings as the door closed on his retiring form. It is described by the writer as the most affecting scene he had ever witnessed.

Some other remarks were made upon Scott, but the *parole* was soon yielded to Moore, who gave us an account of a visit he made to Abbotsford when its illustrious owner was in his pride and prime. "Scott," he said, "was the most manly and natural character in the world. You felt, when with him, that he was the soul of truth and heartiness. His hospitality was as simple and open as the day, and he lived freely himself, and expected his guests to do so. I remember him giving us whiskey at dinner, and Lady Scott met my look of surprise with the assurance that Sir Walter seldom dined without it. He never ate or drank to excess, but he had no

system, his constitution was herculean, and he denied himself nothing. I went once from a dinner party with Sir Thomas Lawrence to meet Scott at Lockhart's. We had hardly entered the room when we were set down to a hot supper of roast chickens, salmon, punch, etc., etc., and Sir Walter ate immensely of every thing. What a contrast between this and the last time I saw him in London! He had come down to embark for Italy—broken quite down in mind and body. He gave Mrs. Moore a book, and I asked him if he would make it more valuable by writing in it. He thought I meant that he should write some verses, and said: 'Oh, I never write poetry now.' I asked him to write only his name and hers, and he attempted it, but it was quite illegible."

Some one remarked that Scott's "Life of Napoleon" was a failure.

"I think little of it," said Moore; "but, after all, it was an embarrassing task, and Scott did what a wise man would do—made as much of the subject as was politic and necessary, and no more."

"It will not live," said some one else; "as much because it is a bad book, as because it is the life of an individual."

"But *what* an individual!" Moore replied. "Voltaire's 'Life of Charles the Twelfth' was the life of an individual, yet that will live and be read as long as there is a book in the world, and what was he to Napoleon?"

O'Connell was mentioned.

“He is a powerful creature,” said Moore, “but his eloquence has done great harm both to England and Ireland. There is nothing so powerful as oratory. The faculty of ‘*thinking on his legs*’ is a tremendous engine in the hands of any man. There is an undue admiration for this faculty, and a sway permitted to it, which was always more dangerous to a country than any thing else. Lord Althorp is a wonderful instance of what a man may do *without* talking. There is a general confidence in him—a universal belief in his honesty, which serves him instead. Peel is a fine speaker, but admirable as he had been as an Oppositionist, he failed when he came to lead the House. O'Connell would be irresistible were it not for the two blots on his character—the contributions in Ireland for his support, and his refusal to give satisfaction to the man he is still coward enough to attack. They may say what they will of duelling, it is the great preserver of the decencies of society. The old school, which made a man responsible for his words, was the better. I must confess I think so. Then, in O'Connell's case, he had not made his vow against duelling when Peel challenged him. He accepted the challenge, and Peel went over to Dover on his way to France, where they were to meet; and O'Connell pleaded his wife's illness, and delayed till the law interfered. Some other Irish patriot, about

same time, refused a challenge on account of the loss of his daughter, and one of the Dublin wits wrote a good epigram on the two :—

“ ‘ Some men, with a horror of slaughter,
 Improve on the Scripture command,
 And “ honor their ”—wife and daughter—
 That their days may be long in the land.’ ”

The great period of Ireland's glory was between 1790 and '98, and it was a time when a man almost always went with a pistol in his hand. Grattan's dying advice to his son was, 'Be always ready with the pistol!' He himself never hesitated a moment. At one time, there was a kind of conspiracy to fight him out of the world. On some famous question, Corrie was employed purposely to bully him, and made a personal attack of the grossest virulence. Grattan was so ill at the time, as to be supported into the house between two friends. He rose to reply; and first, without alluding to Corrie at all, clearly and entirely overturned every argument he had advanced, that bore upon the question. He then paused a moment, and stretching out his arm, as if he would reach across the house, said: 'For the assertions the gentleman has been pleased to make with regard to myself, my answer *here*, is, *they are false!* elsewhere, it would be—a *blow!* They met, and Grattan shot him through the arm. Corrie proposed another

shot, but Grattan said, 'No! let the curs fight it out!' and they were friends ever after. I like the old story of the Irishman who was challenged by some desperate blackguard. 'Fight *him!*' said he, 'I would sooner go to my grave without a fight!' Talking of Grattan, is it not wonderful that, with all the agitation in Ireland, we have had no such men since his time? Look at the Irish newspapers. The whole country in convulsions; people's lives, fortunes, and religion at stake, and not a gleam of talent from one year's end to the other. It is natural for sparks to be struck out in a time of violence like this—but Ireland, for all that is worth living for, *is dead!* You can scarcely reckon Sheil of the calibre of her spirits of old, and O'Connell, with all his faults, stands 'alone in his glory.'"

The conversation I have thus run together is a mere skeleton, of course. Nothing but a shorthand report could retain the delicacy and elegance of Moore's language, and memory itself cannot embody again the kind of frost-work of imagery which was formed and melted on his lips. His voice is soft or firm as the subject requires, but perhaps the word *gentlemanly* describes it better than any other. It is upon a natural key, but, if I may so phrase it, it is *fused* with a high-bred affectation, expressing deference and courtesy, at the same time that its pauses are constructed peculiarly to catch the ear. It would be difficult not to

attend to him while he is talking, though the subject were but the shape of a wine-glass.

Moore's head is distinctly before me while I write, but I shall find it difficult to describe. His hair, which curled once all over it in long tendrils, unlike anybody else's in the world, and which probably suggested his *sobriquet* of "Bacchus," is diminished now to a few curls sprinkled with gray and scattered in a single ring above his ears. His forehead is wrinkled, with the exception of a most prominent development of the organ of gayety, which, singularly enough, shines with the lustre and smooth polish of a pearl, and is surrounded by a semicircle of lines drawn close about it, like entrenchments against Time. His eyes still sparkle like a champagne bubble, though the invader has drawn his pencillings about the corners; and there is a kind of wintry red, of the tinge of an October leaf, that seems enamelled on his cheek, the eloquent record of the claret his wit has brightened. His mouth is the most characteristic feature of all. The lips are delicately cut, slight and changeable as an aspen; but there is a set-up look about the lower lip, a determination of the muscle to a particular expression, and you fancy that you can almost see wit astride upon it. It is written legibly, with the imprint of habitual success. It is arch, confident, and half diffident, as if he were disguising his pleasure at applause, while another bright gleam

of fancy was breaking on him. The slightly-tossed nose confirms the fun of the expression, and altogether it is a face that sparkles, beams, radiates, —every thing but *feels*. Fascinating beyond all men as he is, Moore looks like a worldling.

This description may be supposed to have occupied the hour after Lady Blessington retired from the table; for with her vanished Moore's excitement, and everybody else seemed to feel that light had gone out of the room. Her excessive beauty is less an inspiration than the wondrous talent with which she draws from every person around her his peculiar excellence. Talking better than anybody else, and narrating, particularly, with a graphic power that I never saw excelled, this distinguished woman seems striving only to make others unfold themselves; and never had diffidence a more apprehensive and encouraging listener. But this is a subject with which I should never be done.

We went up to coffee, and Moore brightened again over his *chasse-café*, and went glittering on with criticisms on Grisi, the delicious songstress now ravishing the world, whom he placed above all but Pasta; and whom he thought, with the exception that her legs were too short, an incomparable creature. This introduced music very naturally, and with a great deal of difficulty he was taken to the piano. My letter is getting long, and I have no

time to describe his singing. It is well known, however, that its effect is only equalled by the beauty of his own words ; and, for one, I could have taken him into my heart with my delight. He makes no attempt at music. It is a kind of admirable recitative, in which every shade of thought is syllabled and dwelt upon, and the sentiment of the song goes through your blood, warming you to the very eyelids, and starting your tears, if you have soul or sense in you. I have heard of women fainting at a song of Moore's ; and if the burden of it answered, by chance, to a secret in the bosom of the listener, I should think, from its comparative effect upon so old a stager as myself, that the heart would break with it.

We all sat around the piano, and after two or three songs of Lady Blessington's choice, he rambled over the keys awhile, and sang "When first I met thee," with a pathos that beggars description. When the last word had faltered out, he rose and took Lady Blessington's hand, said good-night, and was gone before a word was uttered. For a full minute after he had closed the door, no one spoke. I could have wished, for myself, to drop silently asleep where I sat, with the tears in my eyes and the softness upon my heart.

"Here 's a health to thee, Tom Moore !"

CHAPTER II.

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON.

Bulwer and his wife—Family dissensions—Bulwer as an orator described by an eye-witness—Critics and criticism—A curious

AT the time of Mr. Willis' meeting with him, Bulwer was twenty-nine years of age. He was a member of a wealthy and aristocratic family, and he was the prospective heir to a large fortune. He had published some half a dozen novels which had brought him fame and money. He was a lion in society, petted, flattered, fawned upon. A gracious Providence had not even denied him the little weaknesses of character, the vanity and egotism, which make success doubly intoxicating. In all respects he seemed to be the spoiled favorite of fortune. He had married young, and after eight years of domestic life the world still held the marriage to be a happy one. His wife was beautiful, witty, and accomplished. Mr. Willis is entirely truthful

when he speaks of her as the object of universal admiration in London. She was Irish by birth, and her maiden name was Rosina Wheeler. From early youth she had moved in a circle of some brilliancy in London, and had borne a distinguished place in it. In conjunction with Miss Elizabeth Spence she had written a novel called "Dame Rebecca Berry," which had met with a certain measure of success. Miss Spence was a clever, kindly, and eccentric old maid, who affected literature and the society of eminent people. At her weekly reunions many of the rising celebrities were occasionally to be seen. It was here that Bulwer first met the lady who was to be his wife. Miss Wheeler was then not quite eighteen years of age, and Bulwer had only recently attained his majority. An attachment sprang up at once which soon developed into a passion, and when the young couple were married, it seemed as cordial a love-match as London society had ever known. And for a time perhaps it was. But a few years passed, and then it began to be known among Bulwer's intimate friends that he had caught a Tartar. Mrs. Bulwer had a furious temper, and she was insanely jealous of her husband. She quarrelled with all his female friends, without respect to their age. She accused Lady Bless-

ington of alienating his affections, though Lady Blessington was almost old enough to be his mother. She had a fight with Lady Caroline Lamb, who was even older. She resented Bulwer's affection for Letitia Landon, the lively little woman who seemed so much his junior that his relations to her were almost paternal in their character. Nor did she vent her ill-humors on the ladies alone. She turned her husband's home into a small domestic hell. Disraeli was then, as always, one of Bulwer's nearest friends. It is said that once, when he was spending a few days with Bulwer at his country-seat, he saw so much of the discord which reigned there, that he strenuously advised him to seek a separation. The two friends were sitting in the library at night-time, after the rest of the household had retired. Disraeli insisted that a separation was necessary, not only for Bulwer's comfort and peace of mind, but for his future success; that the literary talents to which he owed his eminence would be stifled in the poisonous atmosphere of domestic dissension. Bulwer wearily assented to the truth of these remarks, but confessed that he had not courage enough to broach the subject to his wife. Then Disraeli proposed to talk to her himself. He would approach her in a quiet and respect-

ful way and convince her that it would be the best course for all parties. He had no sooner made this proposal, however, than the doors of the library were flung open and the subject of the conversation made her appearance in the room. She was dressed only in her nightgown, and her eyes were as burning coals. "Now, Mr. Disraeli," she said, in a voice that had all the dreadful calm of suppressed passion; "now, Mr. Disraeli, you can speak to me if you wish to."

But Mr. Disraeli, the story goes on to say, did not feel inclined to speak at that moment, and he slunk ignominiously out of the room, leaving Bulwer to face the virago alone.

The inevitable crash could not be long postponed. In 1837 the world was surprised to learn that Sir Edward and Lady Lytton had determined on a separation. For a brief period the son and daughter who were the issue of the ill-assorted union remained with the mother; subsequently—how, is not publicly known—they were transferred to the father's household.

Gossip of course wagged its tongue over the affair. Speculation was rife as to the causes that had led up to it, and one of the parties at least was only too glad to gratify the public

with her side of the story. In 1839, with a novel called "Cheveley ; or, The Man of Honor," Lady Bulwer began the publication of a series of public assaults upon her husband and glorifications of herself. From these books it appears that one of Lady Bulwer's grievances was Sir Edward's envy of her superior intellect. She insists that he was always so fearful of being outshone by her that he brutally awed her into silence. These books, therefore, may be looked upon as attempts on her part to prove her mental pre-eminence. They do not prove it. Lady Bulwer was no doubt a clever and accomplished woman of the world. She was calculated to shine in general society, which is never too critical or exacting. But literature demands other standards. Drawing-room wit is apt to show poorly in cold type. An amateur may be a very clever actor in the opinion of himself and his friends, but if he leap from the private to the public stage he will not be likely to entrance an audience that has been accustomed to Booth or to Clark. Sometimes, indeed, the very venom of Lady Bulwer's malignity imparts to her words an epigrammatic smartness that has almost the effect of wit, as where she describes her husband as having "the head of a goat on the body of

a grasshopper," or where in one of her prefaces she takes occasion to assure him that much as he may desire her death "there is not the least chance (always barring accidents, or sudden good-fortune, such as her brain being turned by a widow's cap) of her dying these thirty years." But as a rule her books reach a very low level of art. It is a vulgar virago indulging in coarse epithets not because they are applicable but because they may sting. Bulwer's mother was a refined and cultivated lady, for whom he always cherished the warmest affection. Lady Bulwer represents her as a loud, coarse, ignorant woman, with as slim a knowledge of the English language as of the ordinary decencies of life, employing her time in one continual round of lies, calumnies, and fabrications. Bulwer himself becomes in the hands of this writer a brutal domestic tyrant, haughty, arrogant, greedy of money, greedy of praise, full of the most odious cruelties, vices, and meannesses. Charles Dickens, Disraeli, Lord Melbourne, all the friends and associates of her husband come in for their share of loud-mouthed vituperation. For Thackeray, Lady Bulwer at first professed some admiration. He too, in his younger days, had had some savage sport at Bulwer's expense; "afterward, when the

relationship between 'Pelham' and 'Pendennis' became friendly, she changed her tune and tried to bite the file, to satirize the great satirist." Here is a specimen of Lady Bulwer's style, from a novel "Behind the Scenes." It is needless to say that Ponsonby Ferrars is Mr. Bulwer. I give the extract in all the bravery of italic type and small caps, of interrogation marks and exclamation marks, with which the fair author was wont to adorn her writings.

In the adamantine chain of Mr. Ponsonby Ferrars' selfishness, to the links of which the complex miseries of OTHERS are ever appending, you develop the *apparently* contradictory, but perfectly compatible, vices of intense meanness and parsimony, with extreme ostentation and extravagance, which are the usual concomitants of the self-worshipping sensualist, and which is a true type of what our present social, or rather *anti-social*, system, with its intellectual *fiorettoni*, can, and but too often *does*, produce, namely, a solid block of vice, gnarled with villainy but veneered with virtue ! (?) and highly varnished with *hypocrisy*, which in these days of pretension and of SHAM, is a far more remarkable and popular commodity than the *rococo* genuine article of unvarnished excellence.

Of course, such violence of vituperation over-

shot its mark. The great public read these books, laughed at them and refused to believe them. Indeed, there is very little doubt that Lady Bulwer was insane and not responsible for her ravings. She did not confine her attacks to novels. She was continually issuing pamphlets calling upon the women of England to espouse her cause. She sometimes drove up to her husband's house and shouted abuse at him in the presence of domestics and of visitors. Once, at a country election, when he was on the hustings addressing an audience, Lady Bulwer suddenly made her appearance, mounted the platform, and made a vigorous verbal attack upon him. Bulwer and his friends quietly retired from the scene. He never attempted to answer his wife; he bore all her attacks with a calm dignity and patience that did him infinite credit. In all his books there is no attempt at a caricature of her. And this conduct was all the more heroic on his part from his excessive sensitiveness of disposition. His son, the author of "Lucille," tells us that "he was sensitive to the opinion of others, and vibrated quickly to its touch. Praise for mere ability gave him little pleasure, and the absence of it little pain; but praise for any kind of moral goodness, the ready recognition of a generous motive or a

lofty principle in his conduct, would almost overpower him, and I have frequently seen it bring the tears to his eyes. Similarly, he writhed under calumny or any misinterpretation of his moral character. 'It is more than injustice,' he once exclaimed—'it is ingratitude. Men calumniate me, and I would lay down my life to serve them.'"

Though the graver charges that Lady Bulwer brought against her husband have never been believed, there is ample evidence that he was morbidly vain. This, indeed, was only another phase of his sensitiveness. Miss Martineau, in her Autobiography, speaking of the vanity of literary men, instances Bulwer among others, and describes him as reclining on a sofa, "sparkling and languishing among a set of female votaries, he and they dized out, perfumed, and presenting the nearest picture to a seraglio to be seen on British ground,—only the indifference or *hauteur* of the lord of the harem being absent." And farther on she says: "For Bulwer I always felt a cordial interest, amidst any amount of vexation and pity for his weakness. He seems to me to be a woman of genius enclosed by misadventure in a man's form. If the life of his affections had been a natural and fortunate one, and if (which would have been

the consequence) he had not plunged over head and ears in the metaphysics of morals, I believe he would have made himself a name which might have lasted as long as our literature. He has insight, experience, sympathy, letters, power and grace of expression, and an irrepressible impulse to utterance and industry, which should have produced works of the noblest quality; and these have been intercepted by mischiefs which may be called misfortune, rather than fault. There is no need to relate his history or describe his faults. I can only lament the perversion of one of the most promising natures, and the intercepting of some of the most needful literary benefits offered, in the form of one man, in our time. His friendly temper, his generous heart, his excellent conversation (at his best), and his simple manners (when he forgot himself), have many a time left me mourning that such a being should allow himself to sport with perdition. Perhaps my interest in him was deepened by the evident growth of his deafness, and by seeing that he was not, as yet, equal to cope with the misfortune of personal infirmity. He could not bring himself practically to acknowledge it; and his ignoring of it occasioned scenes which, painful to others, must have been exquisitely so to a vain man

like himself. I longed to speak, or get spoken, to him a word of warning and encouragement out of my own experience, but I never met with any one who dared mention the subject to him ; and I had no fair opportunity after the infirmity became conspicuous. From the time when, in contradicting in the newspapers a report of his having lost his hearing altogether, he professed to think conversation not worth hearing, I had no hope of his fortitude ; for it is the last resource of weakness to give out that the grapes are sour." This vanity clung to Bulwer to his latest day, and took on many amusing forms. A lady who knew him well gives the following little sketch of him as he appeared just before his death :

"The author of 'Pelham,' in his later years, might have served Boucicault as a model for his *Sir Harcourt Courtly*. Painted, padded, and 'made up' in every way, with dyed whiskers and a glossy black wig, the great novelist presented the saddest of all spectacles, an old man striving to appear young, a sort of masculine Mrs. Skewton, in fact."

The same charming chronicler upholds another of Lady Bulwer's charges, that of avarice. "In his transactions with the book trade in particular," she says, 'he became noted for the sharp-

ness with which he would drive a bargain or conclude a sale. It is said, also, that he added in the following manner to his already large income: he would purchase a house, furnish it, and live in it for a month or two, and then advertise it and its contents for sale, under the title of 'the residence and furniture of Lord Lytton,' trusting of course to his world-wide celebrity for the chance of obtaining a high price."

It was probably to his restless vanity, to his over-sensitiveness as to the opinions of others, that Bulwer owed much of his success in life. It was a stimulus to action, it forbade him to rest in idleness and see the great prizes of life pass into the hands of others. But it was this same over-sensitiveness which prevented him from fulfilling one of the ambitions of his life, that of becoming a great parliamentary leader, and which at first even militated against his succeeding as a speaker. He himself dimly recognized this, as is evident from a curious piece of self-analysis which his son has preserved for us. "I am," wrote Bulwer at the age of forty-three, "too irresolute and easily persuaded except when my honor or sense of duty makes me obstinate. I have so great a dread of giving pain that I have often submitted to be cheated to

my face rather than wound the rogue's feelings by showing him that he was detected. I am indolent of body, though active of mind. I am painfully thin-skinned and susceptible—less so than I was in youth, but still too much so. I find it difficult to amalgamate with others and act with a party. The acting man should never be conscious of the absurdity and error which are more or less inseparable from every path of action. I am too impatient of subordination, an immense fault in the acting man. In all situations of command I act best when I have to defend others, not serve myself. I do not possess, or rather I have not cultivated (for no man can distinguish accurately between deficiencies from nature and those from disuse), the ready faculties in any proportion to my slower and more reflective ones. I have little repartee, my memory is slow, and my presence of mind not great. My powers of speaking are very uncertain and very imperfectly developed. I have eloquence in me, and have spoken even as an orator, but not in the House of Commons. I cannot speak without either preparation or the pressure of powerful excitement. It would cost me immense labor to acquire the ready, cool trick of words, with little knowledge and no heart in them, which is necessary for a parlia-

mentary debater. I might have acquired this once. Now it is too late." This was written in 1849. Nearly twenty years before, the writer had failed in his maiden speech before the House. But eleven years later he was to win a triumphant success. I shall let an eye-witness tell the story of this success.

Ten years ago [says Mr. Justin McCarthy in an article written in 1870] an important political question was agitating the English House of Commons and the English public. It was the old question of Parliamentary Reform in a new shape. Thirty years before Lord John Russell had pleaded the right of the middle classes to have a voice in the election of their parliamentary representatives; this time he was asserting a similar right for the working population. Then he had to contend against the opposition of the aristocracy only; this time he had to fight against the combined antagonism of the aristocracy and the middle classes, the latter having made common cause with their old enemies to preserve a monopoly of their new privileges. The debate in the House of Commons on the proposed Reform Bill of 1860 was long and bitter. When it was reaching its height, a speaker arose on the Tory side of the House whose appearance on the scene of the debate lent a new and poignant interest to the night's discussion. He sat

on the front bench of the Opposition, quite near to Disraeli himself. The moment he rose, every head craned forward to see him ; the moment he began to speak, every ear was strained with keen curiosity to hear him. The ears were for a while sorely tried and perplexed. What was he saying—nay, what language was he speaking ? What extraordinary, indescribable sounds were those which were heard issuing from his lips ? Were they articulate sounds at all ? For some minutes certainly those who like myself had never heard the speaker before were utterly bewildered. We could only hear what seemed to us an incoherent, inarticulate guttural jabber, like the efforts at speech of somebody with a mutilated tongue or excised palate. Any thing like it I never heard before or since ; for no subsequent listening to the same speaker ever produced nearly the same impression : either he had greatly improved in elocution, or his listener had grown used to him. But the night of this famous speech, nothing could have exceeded the extraordinary nature of the sensations produced on those who heard the orator for the first time. After a while we began to detect articulate sounds ; then we guessed at and recognized words ; then whole sentences began to shape themselves out of the guttural fog ; and at last we grew to understand that, with an elocution the most defective and abominable ever possessed by mortal orator, this Tory speaker was really deliv-

ering a speech of astonishing brilliancy, ingenuity, and power. The sentences had a magnificent, almost majestic, rotundity, energy, and power ; they reminded one of something cut out of solid and glittering marble, at once so dazzling and so impressive. The speech was from first to last an aristocratic argument against the fitness of the working-man to be any thing but a political serf. In the true fashion of the aristocrat, the speaker was for patronizing the working-man in every possible way; behaving to him as a kind and friendly master ; seeing that he had a decent home to live in and coals and blankets in winter ; but all the time insisting that the ruin of England must follow any successful attempt to place political power in the hands of "poverty and passion." The speech overflowed with illustration, ingenious analogy, felicitous quotation, brilliant epigram, and political paradoxes that were made to sound wondrously like maxims of wisdom. Despite all its hideous defects of delivery, this speech was, beyond the most distant comparison, the finest delivered on the Tory side during the whole of that long and memorable debate. For a time one was almost cheated into the belief that that elaborate and splendid diction, now so stately and now so sparkling, was genuine eloquence. Yet to the last the listener was frequently baffled by some uncouth, semi-articulate, hardly intelligible sound. "What on earth does he

mean," asked a puzzled and indeed agonized reporter of some laboring brother, "by talking so often about the political authority of Joe Miller?" Careful inquiry elicited the fact that the name of the political authority to which the orator had been alluding was John Mill. Fortunately for his readers and his fame, the speaker had taken good care to write out his oration and send the manuscript to the newspapers.

Now, this inarticulate orator, this Demosthenes without the pebble training, was, as my readers have already guessed, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, then a baronet and a member of the House of Commons, now a peer. Undoubtedly he succeeded, by this and one or two other speeches, in securing for himself a place among the few great parliamentary debaters of the day. Despite physical defects which would have discouraged almost any other man from entering into public life at all, he had succeeded in winning a reputation as a great speaker in a debate where Palmerston, Gladstone, Bright, and Disraeli were champions. So deaf that he could not hear the arguments of his opponents, so defective in utterance as to become often almost unintelligible, he actually made the House of Commons doubt for a while whether a new great orator had not come among them. It was not great oratory after all; it was not true oratory of any kind: but it was a splendid imitation of the real thing—the

finest electro-plate anywhere to be found. "If it is not Bran, it is Bran's brother," says a Scottish proverb. If this speech of Bulwer-Lytton's was not true oratory, it was oratory's illegitimate brother.

Nearly a whole generation before the winning of that late success, Bulwer-Lytton had tried the House of Commons, and miserably, ludicrously failed. The young Tory members who vociferously cheered his great anti-reform speech of 1860 were in their cradles when Bulwer-Lytton first addressed the House of Commons, and having signally failed withdrew, as people supposed, altogether from parliamentary life. His failure was even more complete than that of his friend Disraeli, and he took the failure more to heart. Rumor affirms that the first serious quarrel between Bulwer and his wife arose out of her vexation and disappointment at his break-down, and the bitter, provoking taunts with which she gave vent to her anger. I know no other instance of a rhetorical triumph so long delayed, and at length so completely effected. Nor can one learn that it was by any intervening practice or training that Bulwer in his declining years atoned for the failure of his youth. He was never that I know of a public speaker; he won his parliamentary success in defiance of Charles James Fox's famous axiom, that a speaker can only improve himself at the expense of his audiences. Between his failure

and his triumph Bulwer-Lytton may be said to have had no political audience.

A statesman Bulwer-Lytton never became, although he held high office in a Tory Cabinet. He did little or nothing to distinguish himself, unless there be distinction in writing some high-flown, eloquent despatches, such as Ernest Maltravers might have penned, to the discontented islanders of Ionia; and it was he, if I remember rightly, who thought of sending out "Gladstone the Philhellene" on that mission of futile conciliation which only misled the Ionians and amused England. It always seemed to me that in his political career Bulwer acted just as one of the heroes of his own romances might have done. Having suffered defeat and humiliation, he vowed a vow to wrest from Fate a victory upon the very spot which had seen his discomfiture; and he kept his word, won his victory, and then calmly quitted the field forever. A more prosaic explanation might perhaps be found in the fact that weak physical health rendered it impossible for Bulwer to encounter the severe continuous labor which English political life exacts. But I prefer for myself the more romantic and less commonplace explanation, and I hope my readers will do likewise. I prefer to think of the great romancist retrieving after thirty years of silence his parliamentary defeat, and then, having reconciled himself with Destiny, retiring

from the scene contented, to struggle in that arena no more. In all seriousness, there must be some quality of greatness in the man who, after bearing such a defeat for so many years, can struggle with Fate again, and accomplish so conspicuous a success.

It was not in oratory alone that Bulwer learned from failure the way how to succeed. In a speech at Edinburgh, glancing back with amusement rather than bitterness at past discomfitures, he said: "My first poetry was thought detestable, and my first play very nearly escaped being damned." Perhaps it would be too much to say that he ever fully retrieved his failure in poetry—though his translations from Schiller are admirable, and his "New Timon" is an excellent satire in verse—but was it not long ago decided that a poet was born and could not be made? In dramatic literature, however, after the ill success of "The Duchess de la Vallière" and the dismal failure of "The Sea Captain," Bulwer produced "The Lady of Lyons" and "Riche-lieu," the two most successful acting dramas of the present century.

There is a pleasant story told of the first appearance of "The Lady of Lyons." One evening Macready was dining at Bulwer's house

and deploring the dearth of good plays. He was in despair for a sensation which should be town talk ; nothing lately had succeeded. Turning to his host, the great manager exclaimed : "Oh for another play like 'The Honeymoon.'" Bulwer said nothing, but next morning set doughtily to work, and in ten days he called on Macready with the manuscript of "The Lady of Lyons." This drama, by the way, is founded on the same facts that had been utilized by John Tobin in "The Honeymoon." The manuscript was placed in Macready's hands as a free gift ; it was not, the author assured him, a purchasable commodity. One thing, however, he stipulated, the play was to be brought out anonymously. On the first night of the representation Bulwer was busy with parliamentary duties which could not be postponed. As soon as he had got through with them, he hastened to the theatre. Meeting a literary colleague on the steps, he asked about the new play. "Oh, it 's very well—for that sort of thing." Bulwer pressed his way to Lady Blessington's box, which he reached just in time to see the last act. It was received with enthusiasm, the curtain went down amid a perfect storm of applause, and loud cries went up for the author, which, of course, were not

responded to. Bulwer, from the altitude of Lady Blessington's box, placidly observed the scene with an assumed air of supercilious indifference.

"Hum!" said he, shrugging his shoulders; "it's very well—for that sort of thing."

"It's the first time," said Lady Blessington, as he hurried from the box to the House again, "I have ever seen him jealous."

Shortly after, Lady Blessington laughed heartily to hear that the cynic of the box was the author of the play.

Another theatrical anecdote of Bulwer is worth reproducing. On one occasion Dickens was visiting Knebworth Hall, the Lytton country-seat, in company with a number of famous literary men and actors. The host had erected a stage and scenery in one of the spacious apartments, and the party had engaged in a series of private theatricals. One day the conversation happened to turn upon the pecuniary necessities of Leigh Hunt, who with all his gifts was so improvident that he was continually in a state of pecuniary necessity. It was suggested that something ought to be done for his relief by his fellow craftsmen. Dickens proposed that some theatricals should be got up for his benefit. Forster, Jerrold, and others heartily applauded the idea.

“Very well,” said Bulwer ; “if you will act yourselves, I will agree to write the play.”

Arrangements were made at once. Bulwer in a few days had ready a little comedy called “Not so Bad as We Seem ; or, Many Sides to a Character.” The Duke of Devonshire had a temporary theatre constructed in his London mansion, and an audience which included Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and many noble and distinguished people, assembled to witness the play. Dickens took the part of Lord Wilmot, Mark Lemon that of Sir Geoffrey Thornside, and John Forster that of Mr. Hardman.

Perhaps the greatest feat which Bulwer ever achieved was that of bringing the critics over to his own side. When he began to write they were all against him. But for many years before his death, criticism, which had so scoffed and girded at him once, had only civil words and applauding smiles for him. “How Thackeray once did make savage fun of ‘Bulwig,’ and more lately how Thackeray praised him ! Charles Dickens—what an enthusiastic admirer of the genius of his friend Lytton he too became ! And Tennyson—what a fierce passage of arms that was long ago between Bulwer and him ; and now what cordial mutual admiration ! Fonblanque and Forster, the *Athenæum* and

Punch, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart—how they all welcomed in chorus each new effort of genius by the great romancist who was once the stock butt of all lively satirists.”

How did this happy change come about? [asks Mr. McCarthy, from whom I have just been quoting] Nobody ever had harder dealing at the hands of the critics than Bulwer when his powers were really most fresh and forcible; nobody ever had more general and genial commendation than shone of late years around his sunny way. How was this? Did the critics really find that they had been mistaken and own themselves conquered by his transcendent merit? Did he “win the wise who frowned before to smile at last”? To some extent, yes. He showed that he was not to be written down; that no critical article could snuff him out; that he really had some stuff in him and plenty of mettle and perseverance; and he soon became a literary institution, an accomplished fact which criticism could not help recognizing. But there was much more than this operating toward Bulwer-Lytton's reconciliation with criticism. He became a wealthy man, a man of fashion, a sort of aristocrat, with yet a sincere love for the society of authors and artists, with a taste for encouraging private theatricals and endowing literary institutions, and with a splendid country house. He became a genial, golden link

between literature and society. Even Bohemia was enabled by his liberal and courteous good-will to penetrate sometimes into the regions of Belgravia. The critics began to fall in love with him. I do not believe that Lord Lytton made himself thus agreeable to his literary brethren out of any motive whatever but that of honest goodfellowship and kindness. I have heard too many instances of his frank and brotherly friendliness to utterly obscure writers, who could be of no sort of service to him or to anybody, not to feel satisfied of his unselfish good-nature and his thorough loyalty to that which ought to be the *esprit de corps* of the literary profession. But it is certain that he thus converted enemies into friends, and stole the gall out of many an inkstand, and the poison from many a penman's feathered dart. Not that the critics simply sold their birthright of bitterness for an invitation to dinner or the kindly smile of a literary Peer. But you cannot, I suppose, deal very rigidly with the works of a man who is uniformly kind to you ; who brings you into a sort of society which otherwise you would probably never have a chance of seeing ; who, being himself a lord, treats you, poor critic, as a friend and brother ; and whose works, moreover, are certain to have a great public success, no matter what you say or leave unsaid. The temptation to look for and discover merit in such books is strong indeed—perhaps too strong for frail critical nature. Thus arises the great sin of English

criticism. It is certainly not venal ; it is hardly ever malign. Mere ill-nature, or impatience, or the human delight of showing one's strength, may often induce a London critic to deal too sharply with some new and nameless author ; but although we who write books are each and all of us delighted to persuade ourselves that any disparaging criticism must be the result of some personal hatred, I cannot remember ever having had serious reason to believe that a London critic had attacked a book because of his personal ill-will to the author. The sin is quite of another kind—a tendency to praise the books of certain authors merely because the critic knows the men so intimately, and likes them so well, that he is at once naturally prejudiced in their favor, and disinclined to say any thing which could hurt or injure them. Thus of late criticism has had hardly any thing to say of Lord Lytton, except in the way of praise. He is the head, and patron, and ornament of a great London literary "Ring." I use this word because none other could so well convey to a reader in New York a clear idea of the friendly professional unity of the coterie I desire to describe ; but I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not attribute any thing like venality or hired partisanship of any kind to the literary Ring of which Lord Lytton is the sparkling gem. Of course it has become, as such cliques always must become, somewhat of a Mutual Admiration Society : and it is certain that a

place in that brotherhood secures a man against much disparaging criticism. There are indeed literary cliques in London, of a somewhat lower range than this, where the influence of personal friendships does operate in a manner that closely borders upon a sort of literary corruption. But Lord Lytton and his friends and admirers are not of that sort. They are friends together, and they do admire each other, and I suppose everybody (save one person) likes Lord Lytton now ; and so it is only in the rare case of a fresh, independent outsider, like the critic who wrote in the *Westminster Review* some two years ago, that a really impartial, keen, artistic survey is taken of the works of him that was "Bulwig." When Lytton published his "Caxtons," the reviewer of the *Examiner*, even up to that time a journal of great influence and prestige, having nearly exhausted all possible modes of panegyric, bethought himself that some unappreciative and cynical persons might possibly think there was a lack of originality in a work so obviously constructed after the model of "Tristram Shandy." So he hastened to confute or convince all such persons by pointing out that in this very fact consisted the special claim of "The Caxtons" to absolute originality. The original genius of Lytton was proved by his producing so excellent a copy. Don't you see? You don't, perhaps. But then if you were intimate with Lord Lytton, and were liked by him,

and were a performer in the private theatricals at Knebworth, his country-seat, you would probably see it quite clearly, and agree with it, every word.

The following curious story about Bulwer is told by a German named Daheim. I find the translation in an old number of *Hours at Home*.

MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH BULWER.

Many of my readers will no doubt remember the time when there was no family of some culture in Germany that had not read all of Bulwer's romances. "Eugene Aram," "Pelham," "The Pilgrims of the Rhine," "Cola di Rienzi," "The Last Days of Pompeii," and especially "Night and Morning," were at that time more popular in Germany than the noblest works of Schiller, Goethe, and Lessing. I was a youth at that time, and having heard so much about Bulwer's books, I was perfectly familiar with their titles without ever having read them. Years passed, and although I perused many novels since then, I never happened to read a word written by Bulwer.

One day I was at Genoa, and while awaiting the hour when the steamer would start for Marseilles, I sauntered through the streets, and stopped at last in front of a large cart, on which, as is customary in Italy, second-hand books were offered for

sale. I opened several of the volumes, threw them down again, opened others ; in short, I did every thing that a dealer in second-hand books has to bear a hundred times daily, and which every time drives him to despair. Suddenly my eyes fell on a German book ; I looked at the title : it was a German translation of Bulwer's "Night and Morning," but only the second volume. "Have you got the first part ?" I inquired. "Look among the books if it is there," was the reply, for these dealers who buy their books as waste paper never know what works they have got. I looked—looked—but did not find the first volume. Suddenly I heard one of the many persons that were standing around the cart ask in broken Italian, "Have you got the second volume of this work ?" "Look among the books if it is there," was the reply. I glanced at the volume which he held in his hand, and the binding showed me immediately that he had the first volume of "Night and Morning," for which I had been looking. "Excuse me," I addressed him in German, "I believe we are trying to find the same book." "*Non capisco, signore*" (I do not understand you, sir), he replied, threw the volume on the cart, and walked away. "What a funny fellow !" I murmured to myself. "He wants to buy a German translation of Bulwer, and does not understand the German language." I bought the two volumes for 24 soldi, and went on board the steamer. I

can assure the reader that I seldom read a book with greater interest.; we had already performed half the distance of our trip when I finished it, and, profoundly moved, went on deck. The first person whom I met there was the stranger who wished to buy the second volume of the translation at Genoa. He was a tall man, whose exceedingly pale face possessed a more marked expression of the aristocrat than I had ever seen before. He seemed to recognize me—I do not know whether by my appearance, or by the books which I yet held in my hand, for he gave a start, came to me, lifted his hat a little, and said in French, “Did you buy the work?” “I did,” I replied. “Will you sell it again?” “I will not.” “*Pardon!*” He turned on his heel, and continued his walk. When we met again, I said to him, “If you would like to read the book during our trip, it is at your disposal.” “*Merci,*” he replied coldly, “I want to buy the two volumes, and offer you three times as much as you paid for them.” It was now my turn to turn my back on him, and during the remainder of the trip I did not exchange another word with him. Other passengers told me he had offended them likewise by his abrupt manner and exceedingly supercilious bearing. I resolved to avenge the company on this gentleman. By means of a small sum of money I prevailed on the steward to slip the two volumes, to which I attached no value since I

had read them, into the folded shawl of the stranger. On the fly-leaf of the first volume I had written : “ *En souvenir des ‘ agréables relations ’ que nous avons eues sur le bateau à vapeur LE VELOCE de Gênes à Marseille !* ” (In memory of our “ agreeable relations ” on board of the steamer *Veloce*, during the trip from Genoa to Marseilles). I added my initials to these words. After our disembarkation I did not meet any more the singular stranger, who, despite his incivility, had made a deep impression on me.

Long, long years elapsed, and I had entirely forgotten the insignificant incident of my travels, when Bulwer’s name was suddenly forced on my mind in a very curious manner, and I was reminded of the meeting at Genoa and on board of the French steamer. At the house where I lived, in London, was a parlor, in which the boarders often met both in the morning and after nightfall. I had repeatedly seen there a young German merchant, but had only got so little acquainted with him that I was beyond measure astonished when, one morning, he hastened to me and said, “ Have you at this moment twenty-five guineas at your disposal, so that you could save a man from insanity or suicide ? ” I replied in the negative. He took his hat and cane and turned with a blank look of despair, to the door ; but he suddenly came back and said, “ It is not for myself, but for Count G——, who lives at this house.”

So saying, he walked away. I was at a loss what to think of this application. It is true, I knew there was at this house a Hungarian refugee, who had been introduced to me as Count G——, but that was all. He had kept aloof from me with some sort of affectation on hearing that I was a German, and I had of course not taken any pains to approach him again. Toward noon, on the same day, I came home from a walk, and saw at the door a hack into which a carpet-bag was laid.

On entering the parlor I saw the Count, who, to all appearance, in a high state of excitement, paid his bill to the landlady and then hastened to me. "Sir," he said to me in German, "may I ask a favor of you? I must set out; it is the latest time if I am to catch the train. I have been looking for a message, a letter, but cannot wait any longer, although it will probably arrive in the course of ten minutes. I do not trust this woman (pointing to the landlady); would you, therefore, be so kind as to stay at home awhile, receive the letter, and forward it to the address which I shall send you to-morrow?" "With great pleasure," I replied; "inform the landlady that I am to receive your letter."

He did so, shook hands with me, and set out.

A quarter of an hour afterward the landlady told me that a gentleman wished to see me, as she had

informed him that Count G—— had authorized me to receive letters, etc., destined for him. She handed me the card of the visitor, and, to my great surprise, I read on it : “ Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, Baronet.” I hastened down to the parlor, opened the door, and recognized at a glance, despite the many years which had elapsed since then, my proud fellow-traveller on board of the *Velocce*.

“ Where is Count G—— ? ” he said to me hastily.

“ He left half an hour ago.”

“ Are you a friend of his ? ”

“ No.” And I told him how he came to request me to receive a letter destined for him.

The celebrated novelist ran uneasily up and down, but suddenly recovering his presence of mind, he said :

“ This is an affair in which an hour’s delay may cost a human life. Pray, as soon as the Count sends you his address, come to me ; you will be admitted immediately. Let me have your name, that you may not be turned away by my servants.”

I gave him my name, and he left me in great agitation. My countryman, the young merchant, was not a little surprised when I told him of all this, and envied me the acquaintance of the great poet, which I was about to make. But I was unable to obtain from him an explanation of the sudden departure and the affairs of the Hungarian Count.

Next day I received from Folkestone a letter, in which the Count requested me to forward his letters, etc., to Dresden, under the address of "Frederick Seld." I took a hack and rode to Bulwer. All houses in London are ash-colored and gloomy, but the ancient building on the corner of Hyde Park and a long, narrow, and sombre street, in which the most aristocratic novelist in Europe resides, made the most disagreeable impression on me. It is built in a strange, mediæval style, which is truly oppressive to the beholder, and stands in a corner in such a manner that no sunbeam illuminated its larger part ever since it was erected.

An elegant carriage was at the door, which was open, and through which a strange noise fell on my ears. After alighting and approaching the door, I heard two idlers in front of the house saying to each other, "I am sure the mad lady is there again!" Almost at the same moment a rather corpulent lady, in an elegant but disarranged toilet, rushed out of the door. I believe I never before saw a redder face than hers. It was scarlet, and as smooth as a mirror. If I had been a physician, I should have seized and bled her. She gesticulated terribly, jumped into the carriage, and shouted to the coachman, "Bow Street Police Court!" The two men had drawn back to the wall close to me. I asked one of them if he knew the lady. He replied that she was the eccentric wife of the poet, who, sepa-

rated from him for many years past, was pursuing him like an evil genius, and had charged him at least ten times already with making murderous assaults upon her. He said she had twice been an inmate of the lunatic asylum, but had always managed to recover her liberty. She was now no doubt on her way to the police court in order to prefer against her husband another charge, which his political and literary adversaries would certainly turn to account.

I hesitated to enter the house, but I resolved quickly to do so as I heard in the interior of the house the voice of a footman who called to somebody in the court-yard to have the carriage brought to the door. As I was afraid lest Bulwer should ride out, I entered, and was immediately ushered by the footman, to whom I gave my name, into the cabinet of his master. He was seated, wrapped in a huge dressing-gown, at his writing-table, leaning his head on one hand, and drying with the other the tears of a young man of twenty-two, who seemed to have fallen into an easy-chair rather than sat down in it. So great was his resemblance to the novelist that I saw at a glance that it was his son. No sooner had the old man caught sight of me than he rose and took the Count's letter which I handed to him. He glanced over it, and, while his eyes were fastened to the paper, I had time to read in his features the bitterest grief I had ever noticed on a man's face. The scene I had witnessed in the

street gave me the key to his livid face. "It is too late," he said in a husky voice, "the Count has made an utterly useless journey. Tell him to return as soon as possible. I shall at all times be at his disposal."

He waved his hand to me, and, although I felt exceedingly desirous of embracing the opportunity and staying yet a few minutes in the cabinet of the celebrated novelist, yet I felt, after the scene which had just taken place, that the presence of a stranger could not but be disagreeable to him; so I bowed, and was about to leave the room, when he suddenly said to me: "I believe I had already at some former time the pleasure of seeing you." "On the *Veloce*, during the trip from Genoa to Marseilles, eight years ago," I replied. "Yes, yes," he said, and a smile played around his lips, "I remember the present which you made to me, and which was highly agreeable and very precious to me, for I had once seen the same copy in the hands of Nicholas Lenau, your great and unfortunate poet. I wonder how the two volumes came on the *Barrorchino* in Genoa. I suppose you would not have so generously complied with my wish if you had known the meaning of the initials "N. v. S." (Niemsch von Strehlenau, Lenau's real name), which you probably did not see on the title-page."

I could not but reply in the affirmative, and left, a prey to profound emotion, meditating on the gloomy house of the poet, with its richly adorned

walls, its aristocratic splendor, and the mortal wound in the heart of its owner.

On coming home, I met my countryman, who was pacing the parlor in a high state of excitement. "Do you know it already?" I asked. "I know all," he interrupted me. "Count G—— came too late. He had twenty hours too late the good idea of applying to Bulwer. He will arrive to-day at Dresden, and yesterday it would have been time for him yet to help his friend to escape." "I do not understand a word of what you say," I exclaimed. "Discretion is now unnecessary," he said, handing me a copy of the *Times*, and pointing his finger to a telegraphic despatch. I read :

"Count Ladislaus Jeleky, on whom sentence of death has been passed in Austria, has been arrested in Dresden by the Saxon Government, and is to be delivered to the Austrians."

"Count G——," he said, after I had read the despatch, "had got wind of it; he could not write or telegraph, inasmuch as the Saxon Government would have intercepted his letters and telegrams. He had to go to Dresden and had no money. As I said before, he thought too late of the noble poet."

Next day my landlady brought a large package, containing Bulwer's complete works, splendidly bound. On the fly-leaf of the volume containing "Night and Morning" the poet had written : "*En souvenir du ciel sans nuage d'Italie et de la sombre nuit dans l'esprit d'un poète.*"

CHAPTER III.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, LORD BEACONSFIELD.

Justin McCarthy's sketch of Disraeli in his old age—An interview with Disraeli by Charles F. Hugo—A visit to Hughenden Manor.

IN the letters of Mr. Willis, which compose the first chapter of this volume, will be found a sufficiently vivid sketch of Disraeli as he appeared at the age of thirty. The articles here appended relate to him in his latter days. The first one, by Justin McCarthy, was contributed to the *Galaxy* in 1876, and is a graphic portraiture of the weary and *blasé* cynic into whom the brilliant Vivian Grey had been transformed by the flight of years. The second one, written by Charles François Hugo, the son of the great French poet, describes an interview held in 1868; and the last is a description of Hughenden Manor, the country-seat at which the last years of Disraeli's life were passed, which was contributed to the *New York World* in 1878.

VIVIAN GREY GROWN OLD.

Contarini Fleming, we are told in the novel of that name, was once called upon, in company with other persons variously brilliant and interesting, to write something characteristic in some record or on some tablet—I do not quite remember what. Every member of the party wrote a sentence, which it would be needless to say was either profoundly wise or mysteriously witty, or both. Contarini Fleming wrote “Time.” That was all. That was, I suppose, enough. It was enough at least to show that the hero was a person of deep imaginings and perhaps even inscrutable thought. Heaven only knows—I am sure Contarini Fleming did not know—all the vague and awful meanings which are supposed to be suggested in that one word “Time.” If you, the reader, do not understand—as I freely acknowledge that I do not understand—how the superiority of Contarini Fleming’s genius was made manifest by this concise and stern inscription, that only shows that you are not equal to the comprehension of all the wonders that Contarini Fleming could suggest by a single word to loftier minds. To you it may seem—as I admit it does to me—that Contarini’s monosyllable was one of the cheapest devices possible, one of the easiest tricks for puzzling the reader and making him believe that a vast depth of meaning was contained in what really

meant nothing. It may be that our readers will think the illustration significant of a good deal of the peculiar kind of success won in after-life by the author of "Contarini Fleming."

Time ! Well, if Contarini Fleming wrote "Time," it would seem as if Time had now written himself down at last in very plain characters on the face of Contarini's literary parent. There is no mistake about it—Vivian Grey has grown old. I question whether I ever saw an older face than that of Mr. Disraeli seems to be in certain lights. We have older men—far older men—in our public life here, where a man of fifty is still only a political stripling. Mr. Disraeli is set down in the "Parliamentary Companion" as scarcely yet quite seventy. I believe some ill-natured person has lately taken pains to prove that he is a year older. Still, even if that were so, seventy-one years would place him in the second rank, according to seniority, of our statesmen. But Disraeli has not yet accepted the decrees of fate. He has not yet put off the appearance and the ways of youth. He dresses like a young man ; he tries to walk like a young man ; at a distance, and when he is erect and not in motion, he still looks almost like a sort of young man. But the face, with its fallen cheeks and lips, its deep, shaly wrinkles, its awful hollows, its frequent convulsive movements, the thin wisps of hair striving to keep their color and to cover the bald places, the yellow,

muddy, ghastly hue spreading from forehead to chin, the eyes that are occasionally aroused under the impulse of great excitement to an unnatural glitter—all this seems to suggest one of the most fearful forms in which vindictive old age punishes and humbles those who have shown themselves too obstinate in resisting her approach. Sometimes I cannot look at the Prime Minister of Great Britain without being reminded of Mrs. Skewton in “Dom-bey and Son.” Sometimes, indeed, a more pictu resque and heroic idea suggests itself, and Mr Disraeli looks like a broken-down, plucked, tattered old eagle, whose fights and foes have left him almost nothing of his early self but eyes, and claws, and beak. But always the face of late years suggests that, like Campbell’s “Outalissi,” it is “deathlike old.” It is curious to observe the little pause which Mr. Disraeli makes at the bar of the House—or at least the place where the bar ought to be—before he ventures on the task of walking up the floor to his seat on his ministerial bench. Evidently he still loves to show an appearance of jaunty and youthful vigor as he passes up the floor under every eye. So he stops for a moment at the bar and steadies himself, as you sometimes see a man who has drunk too much endeavor to steady himself before crossing a street. He surveys the distance, makes perhaps a little false start or two, and then goes at it. The attempt is usually very successful ; a little too well

done perhaps for reality. He accomplishes the journey in one stroke, if I may use such an expression, without stopping or taking breath or faltering, but with a sort of determination and self-mastery which show how much it costs to be young and jaunty still. Disraeli is believed to imitate Lord Palmerston. But Palmerston at eighty had no more idea of collecting his strength, of pulling himself together for a jaunty walk up the House, than a man of forty would have. He bowled along without thinking of it. I fear our statesmen are growing degenerate. Mr. Gladstone retires at sixty-six; and Mr. Disraeli has to affect to be still young at seventy. I heard Lord Lyndhurst make a very effective speech in the House of Lords when he was ninety years old; and Earl Russell is still busy in writing books and pamphlets upon all manner of subjects, whether he knows any thing about them or not, and corresponding with the representatives of foreign revolutions, whether he understands what they want or not; and he is, I think, eighty-four years old; and he made the acquaintance in Florence of the Countess of Albany, the widow of Charles Edward, the young Chevalier! Just turn that over in your mind. The House of Lords was addressed more than once last session by a nobleman who had in his day talked with the widow of Bonnie Prince Charley! There, if you like, is a statesman who might fairly be allowed to pause and

gather strength before attempting a rapid walk up the floor of a Parliamentary hall.

Yes; Vivian Grey has grown old! Nothing makes the painful fact so clear as his evident resolve to be still young. He makes up with awful care. I have heard many disputes as to whether the long, thin locks of dark hair which still are arranged gracefully over his head and brow are the work of nature or of art. Nobody knows for certain. I presume the Prime Minister wears stays, but people say he did that in his bright youth. When during the closing hours of a long debate he throws his head back on the arm of the bench behind him, his face seems as worn, wasted, yellow, and unutterably old as that of the Wandering Jew might be supposed to be about this time. The member for Stoke, the polite Dr. Kenealy, in the journal of which he is understood to be the editor, spoke of the Prime Minister's "ghoul-like face." This was in the genuine Kenealy style, and after the face in question had looked with cold contempt on the member for Stoke. But it is beyond doubt that Mr. Disraeli is not growing into a lovely old age. He was very handsome once upon a time. When a young man he went in for personal beauty, and even when very elderly he retained the striking and picturesque appearance which was sure to attract all eyes. But old age has come on him at last, in a malign spirit, and is making him pay heavy

penalty for the past. His voice indeed remains. It is still powerful and masculine. It can still, when exerted, easily fill the House with a volume of sound. It never had the exquisite tones, the marvellous ease and strength, the elasticity, if I may use such a word, of Gladstone's voice, which could be expanded without an effort to fill the largest hall, and compressed into the compass of a conversational tone suited for a committee-room. Nor had it ever that clear, musical vibration which gave indescribable effect to pathos or sarcasm in the voice of Bright when Bright was at his best. Compared with voices like these, Disraeli's is commonplace. It was always powerful, and it is powerful still ; but it had no fine modulations, no delicate tones. Therefore Mr. Disraeli always had to help out his meaning by vocal tricks, by sudden pauses, by odd gesture, and by grimace. All this he can do now as well as ever he did. Age has not taken him, as Othello did his turbaned Turk, by the throat.

As a speaker I do not think Disraeli has in any wise fallen off. Last session a stranger might have heard him to just as much advantage as ever. All the old characteristics were there : the audacity, the reckless humor, the foamy, turgid rhetoric, the queer un-English forms of expression, the sudden and skilful use of epithet, the irresistibly amusing personalities, and the frequent descent into what

really must be called, although one is speaking of the Prime Minister of England, mere buffoonery. Indeed, last session he was positively more amusing than ever in some of his flights. As the readers of the *Galaxy* are probably aware, the first part of every evening's business in the House of Commons is devoted to putting questions to ministers and receiving answers. The House enjoys nothing so much as to hear the Prime Minister answer some question which is intended to be embarrassing and is put by an opponent or by an uncertain friend. All the members crowd in to hear one of these answers as if some scene in a comedy were about to be played. In fact, it always is a piece of comedy. It is as certain that Disraeli will say something amusing as it is that he will speak. But the manner in which it is said is often far more droll than the words. Often the thing is the merest trick; often it sinks to the level of mere harlequinade. A favorite device of Disraeli's for the last session or two is almost in the nature of a practical joke, and perhaps hardly belongs to a much higher school of humor than that which invented for our forefathers the sudden withdrawal of the chair when some unconscious person was about to sit down. For example, a member of the Opposition, let us suppose, thinks fit to ask the Prime Minister whether her Majesty's Government are prepared to submit quietly to Russia's annexation of Turkey. Why

men put such questions I cannot guess, for everybody knows beforehand exactly how Mr. Disraeli will answer them. The moment the Prime Minister rises, the House begins to laugh. Then there are cries of "Order, order," and everybody settles down to enjoy the fun. Mr. Disraeli begins in a tone of grave and almost majestic remonstrance. It is not usual, he solemnly says, to call on the Government to declare what policy they will adopt in the event of a momentous crisis arising, which has not yet arisen and may never arise. Such a course would be fraught with the gravest inconvenience; and he cannot but think that the honorable member opposite would have consulted better the interests of the public and the traditions of the House if he had refrained from putting such a question at such a time. Of course the member who put the question, if he be not an old stager, and accustomed to be the butt of this sort of thing, is now wishing that the floor would open and admit of his hiding himself beneath it. "Still," the Prime Minister goes on to say—and his voice grows even more melancholy in its tone of remonstrance and rebuke—"there are occasions when even the most indiscreet question can hardly be left unanswered without subjecting the public mind to the risk of a misconception." Considering, therefore, the momentous nature of the subject, and the natural anxiety of the country, he, the Prime

Minister, will depart for once from Parliamentary usage so far as to say that if—"That if" (and his voice swells in importance and volume as he repeats the words) "any such event should occur as that to which the honorable gentleman opposite has alluded, the Government will at once and without hesitation give it all the consideration which the circumstances may seem to demand!" The House screams and roars with laughter. That is the whole joke. The man who put the question is led on to the last moment to believe that Mr. Disraeli is going to say something, and Mr. Disraeli says nothing. "Sold again," the honorable member may say, if he really is sold. Certainly the House is in no wise taken in. Every one knows perfectly well what is coming. The thing was done several times last session. Yet everybody laughs all the same. It is not a very brilliant style of humor, you will see, nor exactly dignified on the part of a Prime Minister. But it is a great success here, and the more familiar people grow with it the better they seem to like it. I confess that as a mere spectator from the outer world I am compelled to laugh at each repetition of this simple pleasantry. I can criticise it very composedly now, and think it rather absurd and very undignified; but if Mr. Disraeli does it again—I mean when he does it again—and I am present, I shall be compelled to laugh anew. For a pompous way of heralding a broad joke I know no comic actor like our Prime Minister.

This sort of thing is not, perhaps, the art by which one would like to see his ideal statesman attain popularity. But it counts for a great deal in making Mr. Disraeli popular. The House of Commons likes above all things to be amused. It is not, I am compelled to say, an august assembly. If ever an invader should take possession of London, I do not think he will be awed in the slightest degree by the sight of our law-makers seated in dignified composure, as the Gauls are said to have been awed when they came upon the Senators in the Forum of Rome—according to the legend which Dr. Merivale declares to have “all the appearance of a poetical rhapsody.” Even a poetical rhapsody would hardly get up such a story about our House of Commons. Of its six hundred and fifty members, perhaps some sixty-five really take an intelligent interest in politics, and are elected to Parliament for that reason. Let us see why men look for seats in the House of Commons. First of all there are the heirs-apparent of titles—like the Marquis of Hartington and the Marquis of Lorne. These men go into the House because it is the right sort of thing to do ; because their fathers and grandfathers, and so forth, always sat in the House of Commons before their time came to go up to the House of Lords. Then there are all the younger sons of great families who get into the House of Commons because it affords some chance of a

career, or an appointment, or at least provides them with occupation. Then there are the county squires who go in because it is part of the family dignity to represent the county. Next let us put the wealthy merchants and manufacturers who spend any amount of money for a Parliamentary seat because it gratifies their ambition, pleases their wives, and opens aristocratic drawing-rooms to their daughters. We must not, of course, omit the representatives of "interests"—the railway interest, the steamship interest, the financiering interest, the bubble-company interest, and all the rest of it. Nor surely ought we to leave out the clever and ambitious lawyers who try for Parliament as a means of promotion at the bar. Now of all these various classes hardly any individual feels or pretends to a genuine interest in politics. You will see, therefore, that we cut down the true politicians of the House of Commons to a somewhat small proportion. The great majority of members are only anxious to be amused, and they feel grateful to the man who can always be counted on to relieve the monotony of the business by making them laugh. Therefore Mr. Disraeli is popular in spite of all his blunders and defects. Mr. Gladstone did not often make people laugh. He was far too earnest and too impetuous; he had convictions, or I should perhaps rather say that his convictions had him, for they always carried him whither they would.

Mr. Disraeli follows Lord Palmerston in endeavoring to rule the House of Commons by amusing it—making it laugh; and while implicitly and unscrupulously following its tendencies and humors, seeming always to lead it. A judicious manager of the House of Commons has a task the opposite of that which is proverbially assigned to a judicious wife. The wife, while really leading her husband, must seem to be led. The minister, while led by the House of Commons, must seem to lead it. In this respect, however, Mr. Disraeli has lately been falling far behind Lord Palmerston. The latter always kept up the appearance of ascendancy; Mr. Disraeli, last session, showed a limpness and lack of purpose which were apparent to every eye, and were absolutely pitiable. Indeed, even in his jests he is rather an imperfect imitation of Lord Palmerston. He imitates him as Margate imitates Brighton. I do not know whether the comparison will be intelligible out of England. He imitates him, let us say, as an overdressed *parvenu* imitates the bearing of an aristocratic swell. Where Lord Palmerston was what Dickens called the “comic old gentleman,” Disraeli is often the buffoon. Still the House of Commons has not gained in refinement since Palmerston’s time, and Disraeli is therefore popular. I must say, too, that he has in general that easy courtesy and toleration of differing opinions which it would, perhaps, not be just to set



down to an absence of very strong personal conviction. Mr. Gladstone overwhelmed his opponents with rhetoric, argument, and sincerity, and made them hate him. Mr. Disraeli examines their opinions, as if they seemed to him just as good, abstractly, as any other opinions, only suggesting that at the present moment perhaps they would hardly suit for practical legislation; and his opponents go away defeated, but not actually out of conceit with themselves. Then Mr. Disraeli has another great advantage over his rival, if Mr. Gladstone is any longer entitled to that name. Mr. Disraeli always when occasion requires parades his religion and his Protestant devotion in his public speeches, but he never troubles people with such subjects in private. This is exactly what a great proportion of our honest Englishmen like. They think their statesmen ought to keep making profession of faith and piety every now and then in public, but they do not want any of that sort of thing in private. Mr. Gladstone always made the fatal mistake of believing that what men professed to be earnest about in public they must be earnest about also in private, and so he took his religious convictions to the dinner-table with him and became a bore.

I do not know how the idea ever got abroad, that Mr. Disraeli always maintains an imperturbable and, as the favorite phrase is, sphinx-like composure

under all circumstances. If I were to judge merely by the evidence of my own eyes and ears, and not to prefer the testimony of conventional public opinion and tradition, I should say that the Prime Minister of England is rather an excitable and impulsive sort of person, who often speaks before he has given himself a moment's time to think, and who has an incurable habit of breaking in upon the speech of any opponent with loud interruptions and comments that no one can avoid hearing. This habit, it seems to me, grows on Mr. Disraeli more and more as he gets old. I read, indeed, in every London correspondent's description of him, that through whatever excitement of debate he sits wrapped up in a motionless and impenetrable composure; no gesture, word, or look giving any hint as to the thoughts that are passing in his mind. But if I am not writing about a wrong person altogether, and have not for these dozen or fifteen years been mistaking some utterly different man for Mr. Disraeli, my idea of the demeanor of the latter is curiously at variance with the traditional belief. My impression is, that while an opponent is speaking Mr. Disraeli usually leans his head on the back of the bench behind him, and delivers himself of a running commentary, for the benefit of the colleagues who sit near him, on the arguments, the bearing, the career, the personal character, and even sometimes the personal appearance of the speaker.

Sometimes, according to my impression, the Prime Minister's colleagues are hardly able to keep their countenances at the piquant appropriateness of their chief's satirical comments. Sometimes these comments are made in so loud a tone that they are audible throughout all the neighboring benches. Occasionally the orator who "has the floor" hears the interruption, and endeavors to reply to it, and then a lively little dialogue springs up between him and the Prime Minister. I must say that in altercations of this kind I have seen the latter lose his temper not unfrequently, and demean himself with any thing but that stony and sphinx-like composure which is in the popular mind his especial attribute. Moreover, it is certain that we never had a Prime Minister who made more frequent mistakes out of sheer impulsiveness and lack of consideration than Mr. Disraeli has lately done. Perhaps as he grows in years he is losing more and more his power of self-control. It seems to be generally understood that he is losing his power to control others. People say that he is not master in his own Cabinet. He has little strength of purpose. Some of his colleagues are self-willed and clever; the great majority are self-willed and stupid; a few are stupid and devoid of any will or character whatever. Disraeli could not choose his men to start with. The necessities of his political condition compelled him to give office to some dull and incapable men. The

country party were his strength, and the country party is not rich in talent. Mr. Disraeli shrugs his shoulders and puts up with his blockheads as well as he can, and when they make too great a mess and muddle of things he publicly repudiates their doings and has the work done over again in some other way. But he cannot supply brains where there is only beef. I should have thought Mr. Ward Hunt, Disraeli's First Lord of the Admiralty, was the stupidest man now alive, if it were not for the existence of Sir Charles Adderley, Mr. Disraeli's President of the Board of Trade. By far the ablest man in the Cabinet after Disraeli himself is the Marquis of Salisbury, a vehement, consistent, bold, and brilliant Tory—a perverse, chivalrous, bitter-tongued man. Every one knows that Disraeli hates and dreads Lord Salisbury, and that Lord Salisbury despises Disraeli. Lord Salisbury does what he likes ; he is too strong a man to be ordered about by such a chief as Disraeli. Then the Foreign Minister, Lord Derby, is a slow, cautious, solid man, who detests eccentricity and enterprise in politics, and will not do any of the dashing things in foreign affairs which might call off attention from home blunders ; and he also is too big a man to be commanded by his chief. His hereditary rank and his personal influence make it impossible for his leader to do more than assent to his policy. Sir Stafford Northcote, whom you remember in New

York as one of the British Commissioners during the Alabama business, has proved a great success as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and is very popular in Parliament and the country. But Sir Stafford Northcote's department does not bring him much into connection with party politics, and he is really only a mild sort of Liberal ; and in finance he is an old pupil of Gladstone's. Therefore the Tory party do not gain much strength by his presence. Unfortunately for Mr. Disraeli, the men most constantly and prominently before the county have been the blundering and stupid men, Ward Hunt and Adderley. These ministers have already succeeded in winning for the whole Government a character for blunder and stupidity. They must, I should think, be got rid of somehow, or they will render Mr. Disraeli's place intolerable. At present, however, Mr. Disraeli has an utterly unmanageable and irreconcilable set of colleagues. They never agree, and nobody seems to know what any other is doing ; and their chief has no control over them. Mr. Disraeli never had either talent or taste for the work of administration. I believe that he sometimes frankly acknowledges and bemoans his inferiority in that respect to Mr. Gladstone, who had a perfect genius for shaping measures on all manner of subjects and making himself master of their details. That dry sort of work is not at all in Vivian Grey's line. When he

was young he never had occasion to trouble his head with it. He had to conduct a brilliant partisan warfare, all made up of ambushades, and surprises, and raids, and rattling skirmishes. Let us suppose that some daring, crafty guerilla leader, who had rendered unspeakable service to his cause by his unwearying skill and exhaustless resources in harassing and intercepting the enemy, were as a reward for his services, and when his old age had come on suddenly, placed at the head of a rather disorganized war department, and told that his country expected him to bring its discipline, its recruiting system, its commissariat, and its finances into order. We can imagine with what a puzzled, disheartened, and uncomfortable air he would turn from one to another of the weary rows of figures ; with what reluctant and wandering eyes he would endeavor to compare the unending and irreconcilable masses of departmental reports ; how helpless he would find himself between the conflicting assurances and recommendations of the various subordinates ; and what a look, half languor and half disgust, would settle down upon his face as he gazed over the hideous chaos which he was invited to bring into form and efficiency ! How he would look back upon the bold, bright days of irrepressible adventure, when every enterprise made up, so to speak, its own accounts, and there were no details of administration, and to-day's business was

done with to-day and the field of every operation could be surveyed in a glance! I think Disraeli is at present somewhat in the position of this outworn and awkwardly bestowed old warrior. He never ought to have been at the head of an administration. He ought to have remained always a critic of the mistakes of governments, without being called upon to show by practical proof whether he could do any better himself. It may be only a fancy, but I think it is not the mere coming of old age that gives his face of late its terribly haggard and weary look. He seems to be filled with a contempt for every thing, even his own performances. The very boisterousness of some of his jokes and perorations has something unnatural, factitious, artificial about it.

Mr. Disraeli is, of course, entitled to be considered one of the most successful men living. He is for the second time Prime Minister of England. The uttermost ambition of that restless, ambitious, and unscrupulous heart must, one would think, have been gratified. I wonder what it will all sum up to in history? What will remain? The record of one or two popular and useful measures passed under absolute compulsion by a minister whose whole public career had been a protest and a struggle against them. Who gave household suffrage to England? Technically, of course, Mr. Disraeli. In history—equally of course—the credit

will go to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. Will Mr. Disraeli be remembered as an orator—an orator, with these bursts of meaningless bombast, these tawdry mosaic ornaments, these purple patches, these empty pretences at thought and political philosophy? The powerful and stinging invective is not likely to be remembered when people have ceased to recollect any thing about the subject and the object. Mr. Disraeli's invective and his sarcasm were always strictly personal. Some of the best and bitterest things he has ever said depend almost entirely for their effect upon a familiar knowledge of the antecedents, the recent doings, the character and even the appearance and deportment of the person against whom they were directed. There are hits of Disraeli's which make me laugh still when I think of them, though they were delivered years ago. But how could I explain to a New York reader all the circumstances, conditions, peculiarities that gave them point and flavor? And if I could explain them all, would not the preliminaries spoil the jest? How, then, are these good things to be preserved for posterity? I doubt whether the next generation will find any salt or aroma in them. They served their purpose indeed, and perhaps Mr. Disraeli's career has served his purpose. Perhaps, then, he is content. But beyond the gratification of personal ambition he has achieved nothing but the reputation of a splendid

partisan leader, who at one time amused the country by writing novels and at another time amused himself by playing at administration. In truth, I think he never was in earnest except as a partisan leader. The older he grows the more he exaggerates the mannerisms and affectations of his best days. As "Lothair" is to "Coningsby," so is Mr. Disraeli the Prime Minister—Vivian Grey grown old—to the Disraeli who recognized the Tory opposition and delayed for fifteen years the extension of the suffrage. For his own sake I should hope history will not take him too seriously, nor examine his experiments in statesmanship and oratory as if he really believed himself to be a statesman and an orator. That would be like testing "Tancred" by a comparison with "Don Quixote." Fairly estimated, his career will have the fame of a brilliant *tour de force*. To try it by any other standard would probably only rob it of all renown and write it down failure.

CHARLES HUGO'S INTERVIEW WITH DISRAELI.

It was just on the eve of our return to France, in 1868, that, during a brief sojourn in London, I called upon Benjamin Disraeli to thank him cordially for various kind services he had rendered us while we had resided on British soil. For to the great British statesman and novelist principally, I will say now, we were indebted, during the darkest

period of the imperial *régime* in France, for protection in our island home at Guernsey from insults and annoyances, at which British ministers bearing the reputation of being Liberals, but in reality more subservient to the oppressor of our country than their Tory antagonists, might, perhaps, have connived. This is not the place to publish private letters, else I might feel tempted to insert here three or four from Mr. Disraeli, which, among all friends of liberty, and among those to whom the honor of Great Britain is dear, would be certain to excite admiration and respect.

I took a cab at Charing Cross, and drove to Mr. Disraeli's town residence. Generally followed by bad luck in almost every thing, I was most agreeably surprised when the servant at the door told me that his Right Honorable master was at home and, after taking my card, begged me to follow him.

We passed through a hallway, rather dark, but yet profusely decorated with statues and paintings; something unusual in the house of a wealthy and prominent Englishman, but I had been told by M. Louis Blanc that I must not be astonished at any thing I might see during a visit to Disraeli, because he was so dissimilar in his tastes and predilections to most of his countrymen; and so I did not even wonder when, upon ascending the wide staircase, I found it hung with Turkish carpets, exactly after the fashion of Spanish or Venetian balconies or staircases.

We entered an anteroom, beautifully frescoed, and with windows of exquisite colored glass, through which, just then, the sunlight fell with a softness that lent an additional charm to the walls, the heavy velvety carpet, and the furniture, which seemed to have been selected from among the quaintest collections of Flemish châteaux.

Suddenly the door opened, and the remarkable man, whom one half the English nation almost idolizes, while the other half, although bitterly opposed to him, cannot withhold its genuine respect from him, stood before me. What a remarkably striking face! What splendid eyes! Who, after seeing him once, could ever forget him—either foes, upon whom these lustrous eyes flashed fire; or friends, upon whom they poured a flood of the kindest, sweetest light?

Ah! as Mr. Disraeli held out to me his hand with a sunny smile, uttering my name in a low, gentle voice, I discovered at least one of the secrets of his extraordinary popularity. But he gave me no time for reflection. Keeping my hand in his, he led me to the sofa in his library, and kindly seated himself by my side.

He spoke to me in French, which he pronounced with scarcely any accent.

“So you are going back to France?” he asked.

“Yes; my brother and I.”

“And your father?”

“He will remain at Guernsey.”

“Still inflexible?” he said, with an almost imperceptible smile.

“Yes; but we hope he, too, will ere long be at liberty to return,” I answered. “Our Parisian friends concur in predicting that the days of the empire are numbered.”

“That is evident,” said Mr. Disraeli, musingly—“quite evident. It seems to me Napoleon is now where Louis Philippe was in 1847. Poor Louis Philippe!” he continued, in a more animated tone. “How I liked him personally! I knew him well. I saw him repeatedly in France, and passed a whole day with him at Claremont, only a month prior to his death. What a wonderful man he was! a perfect storehouse of reminiscences. His memory was one of the most extraordinary that ever was known to me. And he could tell anecdotes as if he had studied all his life long nothing but them. . . . Do you know,” he said abruptly, “I almost envy you for going to France?”

“Why?” I asked, laughing. “Perhaps the police will render it very uncomfortable for me.”

“Oh, I don’t mean that,” he exclaimed, laughing too; “Napoleon and I are old friends—we have met before. But with all my love for France, I have never been able to go there for any length of time of late years; and all I can do is to devote a portion of my spare hours to reading French books.”

“ May I inquire who is your favorite author in our literature ? ’

“ That is a question decidedly difficult to answer,” he replied. “ But I believe I may say, with relative justice, that of all French writers Bossuet and Bourdaloue have always fascinated me most.”

“ Bossuet and Bourdaloue ! ” I exclaimed, in surprise.

“ Yes, Bossuet and Bourdaloue. I hardly know to which of them to give the preference. I have read and re-read their works, and have always admired their admirable language, their consummate art more and more. Many years ago I had a conversation on this subject with Alexis de Tocqueville, my lamented friend. He said that I was right. I think that no such sermons were ever written before or after as those of your two great preachers.”

The conversation turned to novels. Mr. Disraeli spoke with the utmost frankness of his own works.

“ I never aimed too high,” he said, “ and so I have no great fall to deplore. Novel-writing in England is different from what it is in France. With you plot is every thing, with us comparatively little. The novel invariably bears the characteristics of the nation. You Frenchmen are fond of dramatic effects ; we are fonder of gradual transitions. What seems magnificent to you sometimes appears ludicrous to us ; and what we consider very fine and

substantial, you look upon as dull and prosy. Make the rounds of the various literatures, and you will always find the characteristic of the respective nations strongly imprinted upon the productions of their novelists. There are phenomenal exceptions to this rule, gifted individuals soaring high above the multitude of even good writers. . . . Still I must say that every now and then I dearly love to read one of your crisp, nervous French novels. Time was when I eagerly perused 'The Wandering Jew' and the 'Mysteries of Paris'; and I think that our English critics have uniformly underrated the talents of Eugene Sue."

"His influence upon the literature of France should not be underrated," I said. "His imagination was an extraordinary one, and his facility of composition absolutely marvellous. You spoke of M. de Tocqueville. That man, otherwise so fair-minded and just, held Eugene Sue in great abhorrence. He was on excellent terms with my father, and remained so even when their political views widely diverged. But he often censured my father, jocosely, of course, for giving French literature such an *enfant terrible* as Eugene Sue. A favorite saying of M. de Tocqueville was: 'Rousseau lived twenty years, and then begat Bernardin de St. Pierre; Bernardin de St. Pierre lived twenty years, and then begat Châteaubriand; Châteaubriand lived twenty years, and then begat Victor Hugo; Victor

Hugo, being tempted of the devil, is begetting every day Eugene Sues, and the like.'"

When our merriment had subsided, Mr. Disraeli began to speak of our French parliamentary orators. He said he would greatly like to hear Jules Favre, whose speeches, he said, read splendidly. I told him that M. Favre's speeches could hardly be recognized in the imperfect printed reports.

"I heard M. Thiers many years ago," he said, "and was somewhat disappointed. He seemed to give directions to the Chamber of Deputies rather than to appeal to its judgment. Nor was his delivery faultless. But perhaps," he continued, gayly, "I was prejudiced at the time against M. Thiers, for he was speaking against my friend Louis Philippe, who, the day before, had treated me with charming kindness."

I then took my leave of Mr. Disraeli.

This conversation had been carried on in a small, oblong room, whose walls were entirely covered by book-shelves. It would have looked like a book-worm's cozy cell, but for the gorgeous frescoes on the ceiling, the candelabra of the rarest workmanship, the colored windows, of which Mr. Disraeli seems extremely fond, and the heavy black-and-yellow curtains of the door and windows. On the tables there was no picturesque disorder: every thing was very neat, and great care seemed to be constantly taken that every thing should be in its right place.

It is in this apartment that Disraeli passes most of his time when he is not politically occupied. Only literary men are admitted to it. The politicians are received in a large room in another part of the building. With all his fondness of public strife and parliamentary struggles, I have been assured by intimate acquaintances of his, that he never feels happier than in the little room where he chatted so pleasantly with me.

A VISIT TO HUGHENDEN MANOR.

IN Lord Beaconsfield's home at Hughenden what he most values would seem to be the privacy it ensures him, and the sylvan seclusion with which it surrounds him when he seeks refuge there from the battle of life in London. Hughenden Manor is not the estate of an English earl exactly, for it yields at the most an income of some £1,500 sterling only a year, but of an English country gentleman ; and it is no secret that the lord of Hughenden has throughout his career been notably earnest in asserting his right to be regarded as a person having roots in the English soil. The affront which he has always most sharply resented has been to speak of him as an adventurer, for nothing could be more unjust, though many English writers not unfriendly to him have offered him this affront in perfect good faith. So little is known of Disraeli the man, that a loose notion is common throughout England of his

having obtained Hughenden through his marriage with Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, the widow of a Gloucestershire land-owner, and of his having in this way anchored himself for the first time in English ground. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In the architectural section of the South Kensington Museum you may see any day a singularly beautiful screen of carved brick-work tracery, unrivalled in England, which formerly constituted the central part of the façade of a house which stood where the Great Eastern Railway Station now stands in Enfield, and which was the residence from 1766 to 1804 of Isaac Disraeli, the father of Lord Beaconsfield. It was one of the finest of the many fine old houses which made Enfield famous in its way long before the rifle-factories came there, and it was a mere chance connected with his marriage which led Isaac Disraeli to leave it just in time to rob Enfield of the glory of giving birth to his now illustrious son. When Benjamin Disraeli issued his first election address he was able to speak of himself as a land-owner in Berks, and to date it from "Bradenham House." This house, built by William Lord Windsor, and visited by Queen Elizabeth on her return from Oxford in 1566, was long the home of Isaac Disraeli, who received there some of the best society of his day, and who now lies buried in Bradenham Church, under a handsome monument. It was Isaac Disraeli, too, who obtained Hughenden

by fair purchase, though he did not buy the whole area of about two thousand acres included in the existing domain. Lord Beaconsfield, in fact, is quite as much of an Englishman and of an English squire by birth and descent as Lord Romilly, for instance, and much more of both than was the late Lord Lyndhurst. Yet nothing could be more unlike an Englishman's or an English squire's enjoyment of a "landed position" than Lord Beaconsfield's life at Hughenden. He has covers for game as good as may be found in Buckinghamshire, but he never shoots; he is in a good hunting country, if a little hilly, but he never follows a fox; he has a home "bosomed high in tufted trees," but he never led a pleasure party in among the beeches. But little company comes for him to the station of the little chair-making town of High Wycombe (or High Wykeham—you may spell it either way provided only you are careful never to pronounce it as you write it). Whatever gayety of the great flourishes here is by the grace of his neighbor, the newly-married Lord Carington, who was the Earl of Rosebery's best man last spring, and whose seat, "The Abbey," lies a little south of Wycombe on the Marlow road. For there is very little for company to do at Hughenden, which, by the way, these wonderful rustics choose to call "Hitchendon." Englishmen in these days will not long endure a country house without sport. The lord of Hughen-

den has learned much and feigned more to please them, but he will not pay with his person, as the French say, for their admiration. He has drawn the line at the arts of riding across country and of handling the rod and the gun. This makes him the most extraordinary, the most uncanny squire, perhaps, except that mad grandee of Spain, Bethell Walrond, who ever held a rood of English ground. To this day the neighborhood professes itself just as unable to make him out as Landor's vicinage was to get along with that strange poet at Llanthony. Lord Beaconsfield, unlike Landor, is admired; he is even rather popular, for he is the most lenient because the most indifferent of landlords, but he is not in the least understood. What a pity, the rural folks seem to say to themselves, that he should have wellnigh all knowledge, except that supreme part of it which is necessary to social salvation, and which is treated of in those supplementary chapters of the British Bible, the "Sportsman's Pocket-Book" and the "Country Gentleman's Guide!" For his part he lives among them like a foreigner on the lands he has conquered—as far removed from all participation in their local pleasures as an Englishman would be settled among the Hindoos. One feature of Hughenden is supremely significant on this point. Nearly all the paths cut through the woods of the estate are drives, not walks, nor even bridle-roads.

The Earl of Beaconsfield's way of getting from distant point to point is a pony-carriage. A "real English" nobleman might indeed be found taking his exercise in a vehicle of that description, but it would be only because he had the gout upon him or had broken his leg! Lord Beaconsfield's early enemy, the late Duke of Rutland, used to go shooting even when he was lamed with the gout, on a shaggy, vicious little pony. High Wycombe is reached by a railway ride of an hour and a half from London. As you leave the station you strike the Hughenden road at once, and in a very few minutes you come in sight of a white house-top peeping out of a dense plantation or natural wood. That is Hughenden Manor in its hiding-place of trees. The woodland is flanked by a wide stretch of meadow, and both are fenced in, so that you must pass the meadow gates to reach the park, and pass the park gates to reach the house. And even the first outwork is not to be lightly carried, as you may infer from the warning, "Trespassers will be prosecuted," set up almost at the outermost gate. But be not alarmed! These frowning syllables mean no more than such warnings usually do. Even the inner sanctum of foliage swarm with trespassers in the wild strawberry season. The estate is then invaded by the urchins of the district, who suffer no severer punishment than is involved in the stony stare of their sovereign's Prime Minister

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when he happens to come upon them in a raid. The mere grass land is comfortless in the extreme in its aspect ; it is only when you pass the second gate that you come upon the trim and ordered beauty of a private park. The abundance of timber has given the landscape gardener splendid material to work upon. Here he has cleared a glade and there a little amphitheatre, and at needful distances for effect he has varied the greens and browns of the grass and the trees with patches of all the colors in which God has painted the flowers of the fields. It is a very, very pretty place, and it is a pity that the house should be there to spoil it. For the house does spoil it. Hughenden Manor was once a not unpleasing eighteenth-century mansion of red brick. It never had many pretensions to architectural effect, but it might have passed muster if it had been left in its original state. In an evil hour, years ago, however, the owner took it into his head to have it smartened up for company, and with his connivance a local genius whitened it all over with paint or lime color to that end. It now in consequence resembles a model factory rather more than any thing else, and may be taken as another signal proof that the owner could not be quite English if he tried, though where he is under no obligation he does not care to try. The lawn, with its richly variegated flower-beds, tends somewhat to modify the depressing effect of the house, and

the interior of the house soon makes you entirely forgetful of the exterior. Once within the doors, you see at a glance with what manner of man you have to deal. It is a house of memories rather than of tastes. The place is a positive museum of portraits, and most of these, as they represent the friends of the owner's youth, are portraits of the dead and gone. The pictures begin at the hall door, they line the staircase walls, they overflow into every chamber and antechamber, and there is hardly one of them that is not a personal memento ; of landscapes, genre pictures, historical and ideal paintings, there are few or none. There is something pathetic and almost painful in this presence of so many faces that will never more greet Lord Beaconsfield with any thing warmer than their pictured smiles. Here in the low-ceiled entry is Edward Lytton Bulwer, in the day of his dandyism, a picture as carefully wrought out by the painter in boots and cuffs and collar as in the fine brow above them. Here is Lyndhurst, the great Tory Lord Chancellor, who was a friend and patron of Mr. Disraeli when Lord Beaconsfield was in urgent need of such countenance to commend him even to the attention of the party which now lives and moves in him. This portrait was painted by the young Disraeli's idol, D'Orsay, and opposite to it hangs the effigy of the artist and the idol himself—the Crichton of his time, the best dresser, the brightest wit, the most

accomplished swordsman, painter, equestrian, and general highflyer perhaps ever seen in London society, and withal, as tradition assures us, the handsomest man, not only of a season, but of an epoch. It is conclusive as to his power that he should have enchanted one who has since been recognized as the chief of enchanters, Disraeli himself. The young worshipper sat at his feet. There was nothing he would not have done for this glittering idol. There was, indeed, nothing he did not do for him. One chief secret of his early impecuniosity is now known ; he gave up the ready money left him by his father, some thousands of pounds, to help to pay D'Orsay's debts. It was but a drop in that ocean of liability, but it helped his hero through one bad quarter of an hour, and with that the devotee was content. Another canvas only separates D'Orsay from the Countess of Blessington—a brunette radiant with youthful beauty. Social history will always couple these two names together, and in its own way—though to the day of his death D'Orsay most solemnly swore that the mother of his unhappy wife was no more to him than a mother or a much-loved friend. Disraeli made his social *début* in London in the Blessington circle, and his associates there were the brightest men (the women never approached her) known to the world of her hour.

A portrait of young Disraeli, taken at this

period, is to be seen upstairs at Hughenden. A portrait of the Disraeli of to-day, copied from one painted but the other day for the Queen, is to be seen below. The difference is as saddening as it is striking. The earlier portrait is in the high Byronic manner. We have a drawing-room corsair before us, with flashing eye, flowing locks, and an expression of wild devil-may-careishness carried out in it to the very twist of the tie. This was the Disraeli of the past, in one incarnation of fashion. In the other—the Beaconsfield of to-day—all the suppleness of line has vanished out of face and dress, the more obviously because the cheek is close-shaven. You feel yourself in the presence of a very hard customer, who has parted with every illusion, and who no longer believes, with the original of the earlier picture, that life is an easy matter, to be carried with a rush. What the second face has gained, in the look of worldly wisdom, fails to make up, perhaps, for what it has lost in the look of confidence and hope. Near this later portrait hangs a still stronger contrast—the face of Byron, with its almost fabulous purity of classic outline. The original of this portrait, as everybody knows, was another of the young Disraeli's heroes, and the enthusiasm of his early admiration has survived to old age, as Lord Beaconsfield recently showed when he headed a movement for erecting a statue to the great English poet in the capital which has com-

memorated so many meaner and less-enduring fames than his. The genius of Byron, like that of Disraeli, was passionate rather than reflective. Disraeli's earliest successes may be almost described as a result of the application of the Byronic method to politics. Let Mr. Lowe say what he will of the "slatternly inaccuracy" of his rival's thought, its volume of fire has often more than made up for its lack of precision with an English multitude. Near Byron hangs Sir Nathaniel Rothschild, in his uniform of a yeomanry captain, the picture of a dandy who would be a perfect type of the British officer but for his swarthy face. The Rothschilds are Lord Beaconsfield's best and oldest friends. There is more than a community of race between them—there is a community of defiance to the prejudices of creed. They have made a social pact with Christendom—the Prime Minister, of course, has gone even farther than that—and the Rothschilds are now allying themselves with the best blood not only in the English but in the French aristocracy, to the great scandal of old-fashioned orthodoxy among the Jews. It is a kind of new dispensation, of which no hint is to be found in either the law or the prophets as they are read in the synagogues, but which obtains its sufficient sanction in society's approving smile.

The staircase leads us to a dressing-room filled with more art treasures—a singularly fine collec-

tion of the engravings of Bartolozzi, whom Isaac Disraeli knew very well when he lived near Richardson's old home at North End. These things, however, may indicate rather the taste of the father than the taste of the son. Beyond the dressing-room is a little narrow slip of a chamber, lined on one side with book-shelves. In this room the secretaries of the Premier's secretaries work during the two or three months of the year in which the business of state is carried on at Hughenden instead of in the old official residence in Downing Street. Lord Beaconsfield's favorite and most trusted private secretary, Mr. Montagu Corry, who is not only his secretary but his devoted personal friend, of course works with his chief in a small study on this landing, in which portraits of Isaac Disraeli and his wife look down, as in a happy dream, from the mantel-piece on the world-embracing labors of their son. You must come down again to the lower floor for the best rooms in the house. The dining-room may be reckoned among these by virtue of its uses, but in no other respect. It is as bare and comfortless almost as a monastic refectory, and resembles one rather than a convivial chamber.

In the matter of gastronomy, Disraeli has always been as careless and abstemious as an Arab. His official dinners, from the time when he first became Chancellor of the Exchequer, are remembered

with a sort of anguish by all the *bon vivants* who were compelled to go through with them. A story still goes the rounds of the first of these banquets, at which one course after another came upon the table either tepid or frigid, chilly fish following cold soup, and a lukewarm roast supervening, until the time of the ices came, when appeared a leaning tower of Pisa, toppling to its fall in a pool of deliquescent rosy cream. "Thank Heaven!" murmured a discontented guest, in a stage-whisper, "there 's something warm, at last!"

The style of the Hughenden dining-room is Gothic, but, unfortunately, it is what may be called the secondary Walpolian Gothic of thirty or forty years ago. The oak sideboard is the best thing in the room, but that is so much like a communion table that it must seem indecent to decant any thing upon it but sacramental wine. It stands in a side chapel rather than a common recess—the taste of a former occupant of the house having led him to reproduce a bit of the architecture of his college at Oxford on this part of the building. One wall is adorned with medallions in marble, brought from Pompeii—character sketches, if not caricatures, of the great ones of the old city. The other walls would be quite bare but for the slender lines of oak panelling which run from ceiling to floor. The comfort which we are taught to look for in every English home is found for the first time in the library.

This apartment is half a library and half a drawing-room. There are plenty of tomes, but no dust. The light is abundant, and it falls as often on brilliant hangings as on sober bindings; and evidently no hangings are too brilliant for the taste of the occupant. Rich Oriental yellows predominate in the decorations, but there is an Oriental harmony in the fittings of the apartment, taken as a whole. The book-binder's lines of gold on the volumes here and there catch up and carry out the color, as an artist would say, from one end of the room to the other, and the place is filled with bits of bric-à-brac which serve the same end. Yonder huge knife in its case of gold is one of the owner's memorials of Eastern travel. He was but a boy then, and he had a marked boy's taste for these glittering toys. Copies of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, lying on the table, show if not the tastes at least the necessities of his maturer age. These two numbers are the very last books he has been consulting. The paper-knife marks them. The reader has but just left them, to take them up again when he returns to the room. Evidently, the hero of the Berlin Congress desires to see what his neighbors think of his Eastern policy—who was it put about the story that Lord Beaconsfield knows no French? Another lie gone the way of the rest! Here, as everywhere in this interesting but melancholy house, are pictures

of friends dead and gone. That of the poet Rogers hanging by the mantel-piece is but a pencil-sketch, amateurish yet not without merit. It at least does full justice to that nose and chin which, according to Byron, "would shame a knocker." Rogers was a very early friend of Disraeli, perhaps his earliest. It was he who took the boy to be baptized at St. Andrew's, Holborn, and in thus giving him his start in Protestant Christianity, gave him also a start in English political life. There are other sketches, more amateurish still, of which the master of the house is the subject, as he appeared when receiving an honorary degree at a Scotch university. The lady who drew them did not spare him. They show enough feminine malice, if not enough artistic ability, for *Punch*. His lordship seems to be quite conscious how exquisitely ludicrous he looks in his baggy robe of dignity, and with his demure, down-cast eye. Presentation books lie about on the tables. One of them, a trophy from Berlin, is a beautifully printed and as beautifully bound edition of the Psalms in German, weighing several pounds. A slip of paper thrust between the leaves says that it is from an admirer—there is no other clue to the giver's name. Near it lies a copy of the parliamentary return of land-owners in England and Wales, the modern "Domesday Book" brought down to date. It is handsomely bound, and an inscription on the cover mentions that the

return was moved for by Mr. Disraeli. It did not exactly answer his purpose, which was to prove that the ownership of the soil of England was far more equally distributed among the people than was supposed. For, if it showed that Mr. Bright had monstrously overstepped the Radical case, it also showed that the few have too much land and the many too little. Perhaps Mr. Disraeli had better have left it alone. But he has never troubled himself much about deluges in the great hereafter.

From the library we pass into the drawing-room, commanding, like most of the other apartments, beautiful views of the fertile uplands with their ridge of woods. It is very gorgeous in its glow of gold and yellow satin. The parquetted floor is in the French style. French, too, in taste, in the abundance of figure-subjects in old china, though these are mostly of Dresden ware. This might be called the Queen's room, for the Queen sat in it on her memorable visit to her favorite minister a year or so ago—a visit of a couple of hours, but it made Russia and Germany understand his hold on power, and it will be remembered in this rural neighborhood for ten times as many years. This room abounds with evidences of her royal favor to the man who has made her something more than a queen, and whose enemies, indeed, accuse him of making her an empress in England as well as in

India by liberating her from the critical control of Parliament, and accepting her will as the nation's law. In the place of honor among the pictures hangs the portrait of Her Majesty, painted by command. On the table lies a ponderously bound copy of Theodore Martin's "Faust," with the inscription on the fly-leaf in a handwriting beautifully clear and bold: "To Lord Beaconsfield, with many happy returns of the season, from Victoria, Reg. and I. (*Regina et Imperatrix*). Christmas Eve, 1876." Here, too, lies a more popular tribute, the "pair of ivory carvers" (the fork almost big enough to form a trident for Britannia, and the knife to match) given by the workmen of Sheffield in acknowledgment, as is told in an inscription on the handle, of the "Peace with Honor" brought back from Berlin. There could be no better tools for the dismembering of that prince of farm-yard birds, the turkey. Let us hope the Sheffield workmen never thought of this. From the drawing-room we may pass to the Disraeli room, a bed-chamber of state hung round with pictures of the family. There is Disraeli the elder, as a boy with large dark Jewish eyes, and as a man. The portrait of his wife, the great man's mother, is now a mere net-work of lines of decay on a cracked canvas. Their gifted son, too, is seen here as a boy and as a young man. A portrait of his grandfather, the Venetian, who made the family fortune in England more than a century and a half ago, completes

the collection. These elders both are dignified figures, tending to show that

St. Patrick was a gentleman,
And came of decent people.

But why linger longer in the house? A view of Hughenden Church, from the windows, invites us out of doors. The church is old, but so bare of ornamentation that, were it not for that equally bare pew in the chancel, "where he sits," I grieve to say it would be little more interesting than the newest meeting-house in town. "He" sits in no sort of pomp, and that is to his credit; but for its position, there would be little to distinguish his line of board from that occupied by the worshippers from his rustic almshouse at the gate. The Young-England theory has left its mark on rural life, if not on political history. In the almshouse, the infirm poor live in the very shadow of the manor. It is a sort of preserve of charity, another of "the curiosities." You step out of the hall door, and you have hardly done admiring the tame peacocks on the terrace before you find yourself wondering at still tamer men who are glad to owe the comfort of their evening of life to the bounty of their lord. Well, well, if they do not mind it, why should you? The graves of the Disraeli family lie outside the church, at the altar end. They are very plain—three grass-grown spaces perfectly flat, or rather

one broad space divided by lines of masonry. On one side lies James Disraeli, that younger brother of Lord Beaconsfield who lived and died in the tolerably lucrative office of a Commissioner of Inland Revenue. His portrait in official costume is in the house. The face is a clue to the history. It is that of a mild, harmless man, without any striking gift but that best one of all—the gift of knowing when one is well off. No swimmer himself, his brother quietly held on to the other's skirts in the sea of Fortune, and with well-founded confidence, for Beaconsfield's stroke was strong enough for two. In fact, it was strong enough for three. Ralph Disraeli, another brother, owes his comfortable place also, as Clerk of the Parliaments, to the head of the house; and he has gracefully acknowledged the debt by giving the name of Coningsby to his only son, born on the eve of Lord Beaconsfield's greatest political triumphs. On the other side of James Disraeli lies a stranger to the family circle, who yet has a right to the place. This is Mrs. Brydges-Wylyams, of Torquay, a lady who made Mr. Disraeli the heir to her estate of some £30,000 sterling, out of her profound admiration for his genius. The story is stranger than any fiction. Mr. Disraeli years ago received an anonymous letter asking him to meet the writer on a certain day in the nave of Westminster Abbey. He showed it to his wife, laughingly, and threw it aside. Shortly after-

ward he received another letter in the same handwriting, and without opening it thrust it into a pocket of his coat. There it was found, and handed to him by his valet. He opened it, when out fell a £1,000 Bank-of-England note. Naturally enough he examined the letter which came to him so handsomely recommended. It proved to be from an elderly lady who lamented his failure to come to the Abbey, expressed her earnest desire to make him her heir, and begged only that she might see and speak with him while she yet lived. The result was a visit regularly paid to Mrs. Wyllyams twice a year for several years, a will making Mr. Disraeli her heir, and an agreement on his part that she should be laid at rest after her death among the Disraelis at Hughenden.

Not much more is known of Mrs. Brydges-Wylliams, though the family is rather a conspicuous one in Cornwall, where one of its members led a Liberal attack on a Conservative seat only the other day in vain. It is her sole and doubtless, as she would have considered, her all-sufficient record. She was of no great mark in life, but she took measures to attain in death to a kind of companionship with one who, in her opinion, was the greatest man of his age. One is tempted to think that she must have judged him rightly, if only because he inspired such devotion. This verdict of a woman's worship is, in some sort, more convincing than that

of the bellicose enthusiasm of the mob. And it was no solitary instance, as we are reminded by a glance at the central compartment of turf, where lies that "Viscountess Beaconsfield in her own right," whose devotion to the present solitary bearer of the title was as touching and as romantic as any thing in mediæval romance. The fortune left her by her first husband gave the second one the means of pushing his way in the political world. He lost the use of it at her death under the terms of Mr. Wyndham Lewis' will ; and, in spite of the timely legacy of Mrs. Brydges-Wylyams, he is at this moment, to his honor be it said, almost a poor man—certainly any thing but a rich one. Before his late return to power he was one of the few ex-Premiers of England who have felt themselves obliged to accept the allowance of £2,000 a year, to which they are entitled when out of office. Disraeli has always sought fortune in the higher sense of glory and fame ; and when it has come to him as pelf it has been by the pure favor of the goddess and not by his own exertions. His life-long devotion to his wife would be enough to prove, were any one impertinent enough to doubt it, that her jointure was not her attraction in his eyes. "They was like a pair of turtle-doves, they was," says the head gardener as he shows you through the shrubberies, cultivated by her constant care to suit her husband's taste. "They was like

that to the last day of their lives. They would spend whole days out here together in the summer-time, and it was her delight to take him to see things which she had done to please him unbeknown. If she thought he 'd like to have a clearer view of the meadows she 'd have openings cut in the woods. She used to tell me to do it on the quiet, and when it was all done she 'd lead him to the spot. Do you see that monnymment yonder on the hill? Well, it 's put up in memory of my lord's father, him that wrote the book; and my lady did it all of her own accord. She had the plans made and set the masons to work without sayin' a word to him about it; and then she takes him out one fine afternoon, and says he 'What 's that?' 'Let 's go see," says she, with a smile; and when they got near it he stood and looked at her for a full minute without speakin' a word. I've heerd as how he cried, but not having been near enough to see I can't say. It was the finished monnymment to Isaac Disraeli, sir, fit for Westminster Abbey. She loved Isaac Disraeli's son like that." As you listen to this you cannot but call to mind many another story on the same subject equally to the point. Men may dispute as to the value of power and of titles. Looking at the price he has paid for them, in this his desolate evening of life, Lord Beaconsfield may himself doubt their value; but who will deny that the man has been happy who has been so deeply loved?

CHAPTER IV.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

The charge of Philistinism—Thackeray's sketch of Macaulay—Notes of a conversation with Macaulay, by E. W.

AS with the last generation Thackeray passed for a cynic, so this one is agreed that Macaulay was a Philistine. No definition of the latter term, yet formulated, is broad enough to cover all the uses to which it has been put, but in Macaulay's case its evident meaning is that he extended too large and joyous a hospitality to the good things of this world. "The brilliant Macaulay," says Emerson, "explicitly teaches that *good* means good to eat, good to wear, material commodity." That is the gravamen of the charge against him. He took what the gods provide; he had no dim yearnings after the unattainable. He was never "disillusioned." The dreams of his youth were the dreams of his manhood also. Carlyle commenced life with a passionate admiration

for literature and literary men (" your literary man is the true King of Men "); he ended by denouncing the literary man as " the most contemptible man of the day—the honest shoe-black is a more respectable and useful citizen." Macaulay went through no such transitions. Fruition did not mar *his* enjoyments. To him at least life's promises to pay were all kept in gold. He extracted a degree of comfort from his literary eminence which is now agreed to be incompatible with the ideal of heroism. Your true hero is nothing if not uncomfortable.

For myself, I confess there are times when Macaulay's healthfulness seems to me a finer and better thing than Carlyle's dyspepsia. A life lived in accordance with its right ends—ought it not to express itself in joyousness rather than in gloom? And Macaulay was not only joyous himself, he took a genial pleasure in communicating cheerfulness to others. Until the publication of Trevelyan's " Biography " the world never fully realized how kindly and generous were all his impulses—how singularly sweet and wholesome the life that he led.

That biography, however, has let in so much light upon his personal traits, his broad geniality, his unfailing good-humor, his unostentatious benevolence, his fondness for children, his

soft-heartedness which made it impossible for him to read any thing pathetic without tears, or to resist a claim for alms however urged, his wonderful conversational gifts, his powers of memory, his extraordinary range of reading, that it is not necessary in a book of this kind to repeat the twice-told tale. I will content myself with subjoining two papers of reminiscences, the first by Thackeray,* written at the time of Macaulay's death, and the other contributed some years ago to *Lippincott's Magazine* by a writer who signs himself E. W.

NIL NISI BONUM.

Almost the last words which Sir Walter spoke to Lockhart, his biographer, were, "Be a good man, my dear," and with the last flicker of breath on his dying lips he sighed a farewell to his family, and passed away blessing them.

Two men, famous, admired, beloved, have just left us, the Goldsmith and the Gibbon of our time.† Ere a few weeks are over, many a critic's pen will be at work, reviewing their lives, and passing judg-

* From his "Roundabout Papers," and a tribute to the memory not only of Macaulay but also of another of his literary friends, Washington Irving, who died just a month before Macaulay.

† Washington Irving died Nov. 28, 1859; Lord Macaulay died Dec. 28, 1859.

ment on their works. This is no review or history or criticism ; only a word in testimony of respect and regard from a man of letters, who owes to his own professional labor the honor of becoming acquainted with these two eminent literary men. One was the first ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old. He was born almost with the republic ; the *pater patriæ* had laid his hand on the child's head. He bore Washington's name ; he came amongst us bringing the kindest sympathy, the most artless, smiling good-will. His new country (which some people here might be disposed to regard rather superciliously) could send us, as he showed in his own person, a gentleman, who, though himself born in no very high sphere, was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet, and, socially, the equal of the most refined Europeans. If Irving's welcome in England was a kind one, was it not also gratefully remembered ? If he ate our salt, did he not pay us with a thankful heart ? Who can calculate the amount of friendliness and good feeling for our country which this writer's generous and untiring regard for us disseminated in his own ? His books are read by millions of his countrymen whom he has taught to love England, and why to love her. It would have been easy to speak otherwise than he did ; to inflame national rancors, which, at the time when he first became known as a public writer, war had just re-

newed ; to cry down the old civilization at the expense of the new ; to point out our faults, arrogance, short-comings, and give the republic to infer how much she was the parent state's superior. There are writers enough in the United States, honest and otherwise, who preach that kind of doctrine. But the good Irving, the peaceful, the friendly, had no place for bitterness in his heart, and no scheme but kindness. Received in England with extraordinary tenderness and friendship (Scott, Southey, Byron, a hundred others have borne witness to their liking for him), he was a messenger of good-will and peace between his countrymen and ours. "See, friends!" he seems to say, "these English are not so wicked, rapacious, callous, proud, as you have been taught to believe them. I went amongst them a humble man ; won my way by my pen ; and, when known, found every hand held out to me with kindness and welcome. Scott is a great man, you acknowledge. Did not Scott's King of England give a gold medal to him, and another to me, your countryman, and a stranger?"

Tradition in the United States still fondly retains the history of the feasts and rejoicings which awaited Irving on his return to his native country from Europe. He had a national welcome ; he stammered in his speeches, hid himself in confusion, and the people loved him all the better. He had worthily represented America in Europe. In that

young community a man who brings home with him abundant European testimonials is still treated with respect (I have found American writers, of wide-world reputation, strangely solicitous about the opinions of quite obscure British critics, and elated or depressed by their judgments); and Irving went home medalled by the King, diplomatized by the University, crowned and honored and admired. He had not in any way intrigued for his honors, he had fairly won them; and in Irving's instance, as in others, the old country was glad and eager to pay them.

In America, the love and regard for Irving was a national sentiment. Party wars are perpetually raging there, and are carried on by the press with a rancor and fierceness against individuals which exceed British, almost Irish, virulence. It seemed to me, during a year's travel in the country, as if no one ever aimed a blow at Irving. All men held their hand from that harmless, friendly peace-maker. I had the good fortune to see him at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington,* and remarked how in every place he was honored and welcome. Every large city has its "Irving House." The country takes pride in the fame of

* At Washington, Mr. Irving came to a lecture given by the writer, which Mr. Fillmore and General Pierce, the President and President-Elect, were also kind enough to attend together. "Two Kings of Brentford smelling at one rose," says Irving, looking up with his good-humored smile.

its men of letters. The gate of his own charming little domain on the beautiful Hudson River was forever swinging before visitors who came to him. He shut out no one.* I had seen many pictures of this house, and read descriptions of it, in both of which it was treated with a not unusual American exaggeration. It was but a pretty little cabin of a place ; the gentleman of the press who took notes of the place, whilst his kind old host was sleeping, might have visited the whole house in a couple of minutes.

And how came it that this house was so small, when Mr. Irving's books were sold by hundreds of thousands, nay, millions ; when his profits were known to be large, and the habits of life of the good old bachelor were notoriously modest and simple ? He had loved once in his life. The lady he loved died ; and he, whom all the world loved, never sought to replace her. I can't say how much the thought of that fidelity has touched me. Does not the very cheerfulness of his after-life add to the

* Mr. Irving described to me, with that humor and good-humor which he always kept, how, amongst other visitors, a member of the British press, who had carried his distinguished pen to America (where he employed it in vilifying his own country), came to Sunnyside, introduced himself to Irving, partook of his wine and luncheon, and in two days described Mr. Irving, his house, his nieces, his meal, and his manner of dozing afterward, in a New York paper. On another occasion, Irving said, laughing : " Two persons came to me, and one held me in conversation whilst the other miscreant took my portrait ! "

pathos of that untold story? To grieve always was not in his nature; or, when he had his sorrow, to bring all the world in to condole with him and bemoan it. Deep and quiet he lays the love of his heart, and buries it; and grass and flowers grow over the scarred ground in due time.

Irving had such a small house and such narrow rooms, because there was a great number of people to occupy them. He could only afford to keep one old horse (which, lazy and aged as it was, managed once or twice to run away with that careless old horseman). He could only afford to give plain sherry to that amiable British paragraph-monger from New York, who saw the patriarch asleep over his modest, blameless cup, and fetched the public into his private chamber to look at him. Irving could only live very modestly, because the wifeless, childless man had a number of children to whom he was as a father. He had as many as nine nieces, I am told,—I saw two of these ladies at his house,—with all of whom the dear old man had shared the produce of his labor and genius.

“*Be a good man, my dear.*” One can’t but think of these last words of the veteran Chief of Letters, who had tasted and tested the value of worldly success, admiration, prosperity. Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part? In his family, gentle, generous, good-humored, affectionate, self-denying; in society, a delightful

example of complete gentlemanhood ; quite unspoiled by prosperity ; never obsequious to the great (or, worse still, to the base and mean, as some public men are forced to be in his and other countries) ; eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit ; always kind and affable to the young members of his calling ; in his professional bargains and mercantile dealings delicately honest and grateful ; one of the most charming masters of our lighter language ; the constant friend to us and our nation ; to men of letters doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an exemplar of goodness, probity, and pure life :—I don't know what sort of testimonial will be raised to him in his own country, where generous and enthusiastic acknowledgment of American merit is never wanting ; but Irving was in our service as well as theirs, and as they have placed a stone at Greenwich yonder in memory of that gallant young Bellot, who shared the perils and fate of some of our Arctic seamen, I would like to hear of some memorial raised by English writers and friends of letters in affectionate remembrance of the dear and good Washington Irving.

As for the other writer, whose departure many friends, some few most dearly-loved relatives, and multitudes of admiring readers, deplore, our republic has already decreed his statue, and he must have known that he had earned this posthumous honor.

He is not a poet and man of letters merely, but citizen, statesman, a great British worthy. Almost from the first moment when he appears, amongst boys, amongst college students, amongst men, he is marked, and takes rank as a great Englishman. All sorts of successes are easy to him : as a lad he goes down into the arena with others, and wins all the prizes to which he has a mind. A place in the senate is straightway offered to the young man. He takes his seat there ; he speaks, when so minded, without party anger or intrigue, but not without party faith and a sort of heroic enthusiasm for his cause. Still he is poet and philosopher even more than orator. That he may have leisure and means to pursue his darling studies, he absents himself for a while, and accepts a richly-remunerative post in the East. As learned a man may live in a cottage or a college common-room ; but it always seemed to me that ample means and recognized rank were Macaulay's as of right. Years ago there was a wretched outcry raised because Mr. Macaulay dated a letter from Windsor Castle, where he was staying. Immortal gods ! Was this man not a fit guest for any palace in the world ! or a fit companion for any man or woman in it ? I dare say, after Austerlitz, the old K. K. court officials and footmen sneered at Napoleon for dating from Schönbrunn. But that miserable "Windsor-Castle" outcry is an echo out of fast-retreating Old-World remembrances.

The place of such a natural chief was amongst the first of the land ; and that country is best, according to our British notion at least, where the man of eminence has the best chance of investing his genius and intellect.

If a company of giants were got together, very likely one or two of the mere six-feet-six people might be angry at the incontestable superiority of the very tallest of the party ; and so I have heard some London wits, rather peevish at Macaulay's superiority, complain that he occupied too much of the talk, and so forth. Now that wonderful tongue is to speak no more, will not many a man grieve that he no longer has the chance to listen ? To remember the talk is to wonder : to think not only of the treasures he had in his memory, but of the trifles he had stored there, and could produce with equal readiness. Almost on the last day I had the fortune to see him, a conversation happened suddenly to spring up about senior wranglers, and what they had done in after-life. To the almost terror of the persons present, Macaulay began with the senior wrangler of 1801-2-3-4, and so on, giving the name of each, and relating his subsequent career and rise. Every man who has known him has his story regarding that astonishing memory. It may be that he was not ill pleased that you should recognize it ; but to those prodigious intellectual feats, which were so easy to him, who would grudge his

tribute of homage? His talk was, in a word, admirable, and we admired it.

Of the notices which have appeared regarding Lord Macaulay, up to the day when the present lines are written (the 9th of January), the reader should not deny himself the pleasure of looking especially at two. It is a good sign of the times when such articles as these (I mean the articles in *The Times* and *Saturday Review*) appear in our public prints about our public men. They educate us, as it were, to admire rightly. An uninstructed person in a museum or at a concert may pass by without recognizing a picture or a passage of music, which the connoisseur by his side may show him is a masterpiece of harmony, or a wonder of artistic skill. After reading these papers you like and respect more the person you have admired so much already. And so with regard to Macaulay's style there may be faults of course—what critic can't point them out? But for the nonce we are not talking about faults: we want to say *nil nisi bonum*. Well—take at hazard any three pages of the "Essays" or "History":—and, glimmering below the stream of the narrative, as it were, you, an average reader, see one, two, three, a half-score of allusions to other historic facts, characters, literature, poetry, with which you are acquainted. Why is this epithet used? Whence is that simile drawn? How does he manage in two or three words to paint an individual, or to indi-

cate a landscape? Your neighbor, who has *his* reading, and his little stock of literature stowed away in his mind, shall detect more points, allusions, happy touches, indicating not only the prodigious memory and vast learning of this master, but the wonderful industry, the honest, humble previous toil of this great scholar. He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description.

Many Londoners—not all—have seen the British Museum Library. I speak *à cœur ouvert*, and pray the kindly reader to bear with me. I have seen all sorts of domes of Peters and Pauls, Sophia, Pantheon,—what not?—and have been struck by none of them so much as by that catholic dome in Bloomsbury, under which our million volumes are housed. What peace, what love, what truth, what beauty, what happiness, for all, what generous kindness for you and me, are here spread out! It seems to me one cannot sit down in that place without a heart full of grateful reverence. I own to have said my grace at the table, and to have thanked Heaven for this my English birthright, freely to partake of these bountiful books, and to speak the truth I find there. Under the dome which held Macaulay's brain, and from which his solemn eyes looked out on the world but a fortnight since, what a vast, brilliant, and wonderful store of learning was ranged! What strange lore would he not fetch for you at your bid-

ding! A volume of law, or history, a book of poetry familiar or forgotten (except by himself, who forgot nothing), a novel ever so old, and he had it at hand. I spoke to him once about "Clarissa." "Not read 'Clarissa!'" he cried out. "If you have once thoroughly entered on 'Clarissa' and are infected by it, you can't leave it. When I was in India I passed one hot season at the hills, and there were the Governor-General, and the Secretary of Government, and the Commander-in-Chief, and their wives. I had 'Clarissa' with me: and, as soon as they began to read, the whole station was in a passion of excitement about Miss Harlowe and her misfortunes, and her scoundrelly Lovelace! The Governor's wife seized the book, and the Secretary waited for it, and the Chief-Justice could not read it for tears!" He acted the whole scene: he paced up and down the "Athenæum" library: I dare say he could have spoken pages of the book—of that book, and of what countless piles of others!

In this little paper let us keep to the text of *nil nisi bonum*. One paper I have read regarding Lord Macaulay says "he had no heart." Why, a man's books may not always speak the truth, but they speak his mind in spite of himself: and it seems to me this man's heart is beating through every page he penned. He is always in a storm of revolt and indignation against wrong, craft, tyranny. How he

cheers heroic resistance ! how he backs and applauds freedom struggling for its own ! how he hates scoundrels, ever so victorious and successful ! how he recognizes genius, though selfish villains possess it ! The critic who says Macaulay has no heart, might say that Johnson had none : and two men more generous, and more loving, and more hating, and more partial, and more noble, do not live in our history. Those who knew Lord Macaulay knew how admirably tender and generous * and affectionate he was. It was not his business to bring his family before the theatre footlights, and call for bouquets from the gallery as he wept over them.

A REMINISCENCE OF MACAULAY.

It was in June, 1857, that I had the good fortune to meet Macaulay at dinner at the house of my dear friend, the Rev. Derwent Coleridge, then Principal of St. Mark's College, Chelsea. The brilliant career of the great talker and essayist was drawing to its close, and it is partly on this account that I make now what record I can of my single meeting with him. He was beginning to give up society, so that only at the houses of his oldest friends was

* Since the above was written, I have been informed that it has been found, on examining Lord Macaulay's papers, that he was in the habit of giving away *more than a fourth part* of his annual income.

there any chance of seeing him. Besides the special attraction of Macaulay's presence, it was an interesting company that was gathered that evening around my friend's hospitable board. One felt that the English dinner, that choicest of all opportunities for exchange of thought, was here to be enjoyed in high perfection.

Among the guests were Mr. Blore, an elderly gentleman, one of whose distinctions was that he had been a friend of Sir Walter Scott and the architect of Abbotsford ; Mr. Helmore, the well-known writer on choral music ; Mr. Tremenheere, who had travelled in America and had written on the subject of education in our country ; and Mr. Herbert Coleridge, the gifted son of Sara Coleridge — a young man of the highest promise, who had taken a double first-class at Oxford. Alas ! that his mother, herself of such brilliant powers, had not lived to know of this high achievement of her son !—she whose love and thought for her children, and unwearyed efforts for their intellectual advancement, are so abundantly shown in the “*Memoir and Letters*” which her daughter has lately published ! Alas ! too, that the son for whom such high hopes had been cherished, and whose opening manhood was of such promise, was himself cut off three years after the time of which I now write ! Miss Edith Coleridge, the other child of Sara Coleridge, was also present. She was even then meditating the

memoir of her mother, that work of filial duty which three years ago she accomplished with a grace and propriety beyond all praise.

Of my host, Mr. Derwent Coleridge, and of Mrs. Coleridge, my dear and honored friends of so many years, I must not permit myself to speak. I may note only the brilliant conversational power of Mr. Coleridge, and the fact that as I listen to him I perfectly understand the marvellous gifts in this way of his father, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Again and again I have been held as if under a spell by the flowing stream of his delightful monologue. He had been the friend in boyhood of Macaulay, and almost the first published words of the afterward famous writer had appeared in conjunction with a like youthful effort of Derwent Coleridge. Mr. Coleridge has been the biographer of Winthrop Praed and the editor of his poems, and only a year ago he published a touching tribute to John Moultrie. These two poets were also the companions in youth of Macaulay, and each was in a way a stimulus to the others in their first intellectual efforts. My place at the table was just opposite to Macaulay, and I need not say with what keen interest I looked at him and watched his countenance as he became animated in conversation. His face was round, and his complexion was colorless, one might almost say pallid ; his hair, which appeared to have been of a brownish hue, had become almost white.

He was no doubt then beginning to break in health, and perhaps this, which could only be called a premature decay, was the penalty he was at length paying for the years he had spent in India. His neck was short, and his figure was short and ungainly. His eye had a quick flash, and his change of expression was rapid; his head, too, had a quick movement; and altogether there was a look of vivacity which showed that his intellect was as keen as ever. He was always ready to speak, whatever the subject, but he showed no disposition to take all the talk. There was no moment of pause in the flowing after-dinner discussions, for our host, as well as several of his guests, was abundantly able to hold his own with this marvellous and every way delightful talker—this prince in the domain of London social life.

There was some conversation about Nollekens the sculptor, whose inordinate love of money was such a curious blemish in his character. Macaulay told one or two stories illustrating his parsimony. Then he came to speak of art in general, and said he did not think the faculty for it a high gift of mind. This opinion was strongly combated by Mr. Blore the architect and others, but I remember Macaulay gave, as in some sort an illustration of his theory, a story of Grant the portrait-painter, then of chief eminence in London. Cornewall Lewis was to sit to him, and Grant, knowing he had written

books, desired to get at least a smattering of them before the sittings began. But some one, perhaps mischievously, told him Lewis was the author of "The Monk," and this book he accordingly read. He took an early opportunity to refer to it to his sitter, who to his no small discomfiture disclaimed it. As conclusive proof of the truth of this denial, Lewis stated further that the book was written before he was born. Everybody was amused that Cornewall Lewis, so famous for abstruse learning, should have deemed it necessary to appeal thus to dates to show he was not the author of a novel.

Macaulay persisted in his theory that artistic power was not an intellectual faculty, but I could not quite determine whether he was not putting it forth as mere paradox. One could fancy the paroxysm of rage into which Haydon would have been thrown had such a theory been advanced in his presence; or Fuseli, who, as Haydon reports, exclaimed, on first seeing the Elgin Marbles, with his strange accent: "Those Greeks, they were *godes!*" But the thought of Michel Angelo and of Leonardo was a sufficient answer to the theory.

Macaulay, in further support of his general proposition, maintained that a man might be a great musical composer and yet not in the true sense a man of genius. He instanced Mozart, who, he said, was not claimed to have been of high intellectual ability. Mr. Herbert Coleridge said he thought this a mis-

take, but he urged that full details were wanting in regard to his mental capacity as shown in other ways than in music. Macaulay replied that Mozart was the Raphael of music, and was both a composer and a wonderful performer at the age of six. "Now," said he, "we cannot conceive of any one being a great poet at the age of six ; we hear nothing of Shakespeare or Milton at the age of six."

The conversation turned to Homer and the question whether the Homeric poems were the product of one mind. Macaulay maintained they were. It was inconceivable, he said, that there could have been at the Homeric period five or six poets equal to the production of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," Great poets appeared at long intervals. As he reckoned them, there had been but six given to the world—Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, Sophocles, and Æschylus. With the exception of the last two, there had been great spaces of time between these. Could it be supposed that at the very dawn of history there was a group, as it were, of men each in the highest degree gifted with "the vision and the faculty divine" ? Then as to the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" being both the production of Homer : if we admitted one to be, that the other was would follow as a matter of course. It was the old test of Paley over again—the finding the watch, and the presumption from it of a maker ; and in this case there was the watchmaker's shop close by. He urged,

too, that Homer was the only great poet who did not in narrating past events use the present tense—speak of them as if happening at the moment. He quoted long passages from “Paradise Lost” to show how Milton would fall into the present tense, though he might have begun in the past. The fact that throughout the many thousand lines of Homer no instance of the sort could be found seemed to make it clear that but one mind produced them. It was very interesting to hear Macaulay recite Milton, for whom he had such passionate admiration. He made quotations also from Burns and from old ballads in illustration of some theory which I do not recall, but showing his wonderful memory. He had, indeed, an altogether marvellous facility in producing passages as he might need them for whatever subject he was discussing. Greville, writing of him in 1836, says that he displayed feats of memory unequalled by any other human being, and that he could repeat all Milton and all Demosthenes and a great part of the Bible. “But his great *forte*,” Greville adds, “is history, especially English history. Here his superhuman memory, which appears to have the faculty of digesting and arranging, as well as of retaining, has converted his mind into a mighty magazine of knowledge, from which, with the precision and correctness of a kind of intellectual machine, he pours forth stores of learning, information, precept, example, anecdote, and illustra-

tion with a familiarity and facility not less astonishing than delightful."

Our evening was all too short. The talk had never flagged, and so the time had gone quickly by. I may note that in the discussions about Homer, Mr. Herbert Coleridge had shown the utmost familiarity with the subject, making him seem in this respect quite on a level with Macaulay.

The time came for us to join the ladies in the drawing-room, but Macaulay's carriage was announced, and he declined going up-stairs again, saying that his shortness of breath warned him it was dangerous to do so. This symptom was doubtless due to that affection of the heart which two years and a half later ended his life. As I have said, he was beginning to give up dining out on account of his failing health. But his delight was as great as ever in the society of his near friends among men of letters, and these he continued to gather at the breakfasts he had long been in the habit of giving—Dean Milman, Lord Stanhope, the Bishop of St. David's (Thirlwall), our host, Mr. Coleridge, and others. Occasionally he gave dinners to two persons. His apartments were in Piccadilly, at what is known as the Albany. His emoluments from his Indian appointment were ten thousand pounds a year; and though he held the position little more than three years, it was understood that his savings from it gave him an income of a thousand pounds. This

was before his English "History" brought him in its great returns. His parliamentary life, Mr. Coleridge said, had not been a success; he did good to neither party—indeed, was dangerous to both. I may note a characteristic remark of his which was mentioned to me by Mr. Coleridge: it was to the effect that what troubled us most in life were the lesser worries and vexations; great perplexities and calamities we somehow nerved ourselves to contend with. "If a thousand megatheriums were let loose upon the world, in twenty-four hours they would all be in museums."

CHAPTER V.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

Reminiscences of an old schoolfellow—Gossip with Martha Brown—Miss Martineau's reminiscences—An anecdote of Charlotte Brontë—Thackeray's *in memoriam* sketch.

THE memorials of Charlotte Brontë brought together in this chapter are collected from the following sources: The "Reminiscences of an Old Schoolfellow" are from *Scribner's Monthly*; "A Gossip with Martha Brown" (the old faithful servant of the Brontës, whose name is frequently mentioned by Mrs. Gaskell) is clipped from the columns of *The Yorkshireman*, an English newspaper; Miss Martineau's "Reminiscences" are from her "Autobiography"; Mr. R. H. Horne's "Anecdote of Charlotte Brontë" was contributed to an English magazine; and the article by Thackeray is from the "Roundabout Papers."

REMINISCENCES OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË, BY AN
OLD SCHOOLFELLOW.

Arriving at school about a week after the general assembling of the pupils, I was not expected to ac-

company them when the time came for their daily exercise, but while they were out, I was led into the school-room, and quietly left to make my observations. I had come to the conclusion it was very nice and comfortable for a school-room, though I had little knowledge of school-rooms in general, when, turning to the window to observe the look-out, I became aware for the first time that I was not alone ; there was a silent, weeping, dark little figure in the large bay-window ; she must, I thought, have risen from the floor. As soon as I had recovered from my surprise, I went from the far end of the room, where the book-shelves were, the contents of which I must have contemplated with a little awe in anticipation of coming studies. A crimson cloth covered the long table down the centre of the room, which helped, no doubt, to hide the shrinking little figure from my view. I was touched and troubled at once to see her so sad and so tearful.

I said *shrinking*, because her attitude, when I saw her, was that of one who wished to hide both herself and her grief. She did not shrink, however, when spoken to, but in very few words confessed she was "homesick." After a little of such comfort as could be offered, it was suggested to her that there was a possibility of her too having to comfort the speaker by and by for the same cause. A faint quivering smile then lighted her face ; the tear-

drops fell ; we silently took each other's hands, and at once we felt that genuine sympathy which always consoles, even though it be unexpressed. We did not talk or stir till we heard the approaching footsteps of other pupils coming in from their play ; it had been a game called "French and English," which was always very vigorously played, but in which Charlotte Brontë never could be induced to join. Perhaps the merry voices contesting for victory, which reached our ears in the school-room, jarred upon her then sensitive misery, and caused her ever after to dislike the game ; but she was physically unequal to that exercise of muscle, which was keen enjoyment to strong, healthy girls, both older and younger than herself. Miss Wooler's system of education required that a good deal of her pupils' work should be done in classes, and to effect this, new pupils had generally a season of solitary study ; but Charlotte's fervent application made this period a very short one to her,—she was quickly up to the needful standard, and ready for the daily routine and arrangement of studies, and as quickly did she outstrip her companions, rising from the bottom of the classes to the top, a position which, when she had once gained, she never had to regain. She was first in every thing but play, yet never was a word heard of envy or jealousy from her companions ; every one felt she had won her laurels by an amount of diligence and hard labor of

which they were incapable. She never exulted in her successes or seemed conscious of them ; her mind was so wholly set on attaining knowledge that she apparently forgot all else.

Charlotte's appearance did not strike me at first as it did others. I saw her grief, not herself particularly till afterward. She never seemed to me the unattractive little person others designated her, but certainly she was at this time any thing but *pretty* ; even her good points were lost. Her naturally beautiful hair of soft silky brown being then dry and frizzy-looking, screwed up in tight little curls, showing features that were all the plainer from her exceeding thinness and want of complexion ; she looked "dried in." A dark, rusty green stuff dress of old-fashioned make detracted still more from her appearance ; but let her wear what she might, or do what she would, she had ever the demeanor of a born gentlewoman ; vulgarity was an element that never won the slightest affinity with her nature. Some of the elder girls, who had been years at school, thought her ignorant. This was true in one sense ; ignorant she was indeed in the elementary education which is given in schools, but she far surpassed her most advanced school-fellows in knowledge of what was passing in the world at large, and in the literature of her country. She knew a thousand things in these matters unknown to them.

She had taught herself a little French before she came to school ; this little knowledge of the language was very useful to her when afterward she was engaged in translation or dictation. She soon began to make a good figure in French lessons. Music she wished to acquire, for which she had both ear and taste, but her nearsightedness caused her to stoop so dreadfully in order to see her notes, she was dissuaded from persevering in the acquirement, especially as she had at this time an invincible objection to wearing glasses. Her very taper fingers, tipped with the most circular nails, did not seem very suited for instrumental execution ; but when wielding the pen or the pencil, they appeared in the very office they were created for.

Her appetite was of the smallest ; for years she had not tasted animal food ; she had the greatest dislike to it ; she always had something specially provided for her at our mid-day repast. Toward the close of the first half-year she was induced to take, by little and little, meat gravy with vegetable, and in the second half-year she commenced taking a very small portion of animal food daily. She then grew a little bit plumper, lookēd younger and more animated, though she was never what is called lively at this period. She always seemed to feel that a deep responsibility rested upon her ; that she was an object of expense to those at home, and that she must use every moment to attain the purpose for which

she was sent to school, *i. e.*, to fit herself for governess life. She had almost too much opportunity for her conscientious diligence ; we were so little restricted in our doings, the industrious might accomplish the appointed tasks of the day and enjoy a little leisure, but she chose in many things to do *double* lessons when not prevented by class arrangement or a companion. In two of her studies she was associated with her friend, and great was her distress if her companion failed to be ready, when she was, with the lesson of the day. She liked the stated task to be over, that she might be free to pursue her self-appointed ones. Such, however, was her conscientiousness that she never did what some girls think it generous to do : generous and unselfish though she was, she never whispered help to a companion in class (as she might have done), to rid herself of the trouble of having to appear again. All her school-fellows regarded her, I believe, as a model of high rectitude, close application, and great abilities. She did not play or amuse herself when others did. When her companions were merry round the fire, or otherwise enjoying themselves during the twilight, which was always a precious time of relaxation, she would be kneeling close to the window busy with her studies, and this would last so long that she was accused of seeing in the dark ; yet though she did not play, as girls style play, she was ever ready to help with suggestions in those plays which required taste or arrangement.

When her companions formed the idea of having a coronation performance on a half-holiday, it was Charlotte Brontë who drew up the programme, arranged the titles to be adopted by her companions for the occasion, wrote the invitations to those who were to grace the ceremony, and selected for each a title, either for sound that pleased the ear or for historical association. The preparations for these extra half-holidays (which were very rare occurrences) sometimes occupied spare moments for weeks before the event. On this occasion Charlotte prepared a very elegant little speech for the one who was selected to present the crown. Miss W.'s younger sister consented after much entreaty to be crowned as our queen (a very noble, stately queen she made), and did her pupils all the honor she could by adapting herself to the rôle of the moment. The following exquisite little speech shows Charlotte's aptitude, even then, at giving fitting expression to her thoughts :—

“ Powerful Queen ! accept this Crown, the symbol of dominion, from the hands of your faithful and affectionate subjects ! And if their earnest and united wishes have any efficacy, you will long be permitted to reign over this peaceful, though circumscribed empire. [Signed, &c., &c.]

“ Your loyal subjects.”

The little fête finished off with what was called a ball ; but for lack of numbers we had to content

ourselves with one quadrille and two Scotch reels. Last of all there was a supper, which was considered very *recherché*, most of it having been coaxed out of yielding mammas and elder sisters, in addition to some wise expenditure of pocket-money. The grand feature, however, of the supper was the attendance of a mulatto servant. We descended for a moment from our assumed dignities to improvise this distinguishing appanage. The liveliest of our party, "Jessie York," volunteered this office, and surpassed our expectations. Charlotte evidently enjoyed the fun, in her own quiet way, as much as any one, and ever after with great zest helped, when with old school-fellows, to recall the performances of the exceptional half-holidays.

About a month after the assembling of the school, one of the pupils had an illness. There was great competition among the girls for permission to sit with the invalid, but Charlotte was never of the number, though she was as assiduous in kindness and attention as the rest in spare moments; but to sit with the patient was indulgence and leisure, and these she would not permit herself.

It was shortly after this illness that Charlotte caused such a panic of terror by her thrilling relations of the wanderings of a somnambulist. She brought together all the horrors her imagination could create, from surging seas, raging breakers, towering castle walls, high precipices, invisible

chasms and dangers. Having wrought these materials to the highest pitch of effect, she brought out, in almost cloud-height, her somnambulist, walking on shaking turrets,—all told in a voice that conveyed more than words alone can express. A shivering terror seized the recovered invalid ; a pause ensued ; then a subdued cry of pain came from Charlotte herself, with a terrified command to others to call for help. She was in bitter distress. Something like remorse seemed to linger in her mind after this incident ; for weeks there was no prevailing upon her to resume her tales, and she never again created terrors for her listeners. Tales, however, were made again in time, till Miss W. discovered there was “late talking.” That was forbidden ; but understanding it was “late talk ” only which was prohibited, we talked and listened to tales again, not expecting to hear Miss C. H. W. say, one morning : “All the ladies who talked last night must pay fines. I am sure Miss Brontë and Miss — were not of the number.” Miss Brontë and Miss — were, however, transgressors like the rest, and rather enjoyed the fact of having to pay like them, till they saw Miss W.’s grieved and disappointed look. It was then a distress that they had failed where they were reckoned upon, though unintentionally. This was the only school-fine Charlotte ever incurred.

At the close of the first half-year, Charlotte bore

off three prizes. For one she had to draw lots with her friend—a moment of painful suspense to both ; for neither wished to deprive the other of her reward. Happily, Charlotte won it, and so had the gratifying pleasure of carrying home three tangible proofs of her goodness and industry. Miss W. had two badges of conduct for her pupils which were wonderfully effective, except with the most careless : a black ribbon, worn in the style of the Order of the Garter, which the pupils passed from one to another for any breach of rules, unlady-like manners, or incorrect grammar. Charlotte might, in her very earliest school-days, have worn “the mark,” as we styled it, but I never remember her having it. The silver medal, which was the badge for the fulfilment of duties, she won the right to in her first half-year. This she never afterward forfeited, and it was presented to her on leaving school. She was only three half-years at school. In this time she went through all the elementary teaching contained in our school-books. She was in the habit of committing long pieces of poetry to memory, and seemed to do so with real enjoyment and hardly any effort.

In these early days, whenever she was certain of being quite alone with her friend, she would talk much of her two dead sisters, Maria and Elizabeth. Her love for them was most intense ; a kind of adoration dwelt in her feelings which, as she conversed, almost imparted itself to her listener.

She described Maria as a little mother among the rest, superhuman in goodness and cleverness. But the most touching of all were the revelations of her sufferings,—how she suffered with the sensibility of a grown-up person, and endured with a patience and fortitude that were Christ-like. Charlotte would still weep and suffer when thinking of her. She talked of Elizabeth also, but never with the anguish of expression which accompanied her recollections of Maria. When surprise was expressed that she should know so much about her sisters when they were so young, and she herself still younger, she said she began to analyze character when she was five years old, and instanced two guests who were at her home for a day or two, and of whom she had taken stock, and of whom after-knowledge confirmed first impressions.

The following lines, though not regarded of sufficient merit for publication in the volume of poems, yet have an interest as they depict her then desolated heart.

MEMORY.

When the dead in their cold graves are lying
Asleep, to wake never again !
When past are their smiles and their sighing,
Oh ! why should their memories remain ?
Though sunshine and spring may have lightened
The wild flowers that blow on their graves,
Though summer their tombstones have brightened,
And autumn have palled them with leaves,

And winter have wildly bewailed them
With his dirge wind as sad as a knell,
And the shroud of his snow-wreath have veiled them,
Still—how deep in our bosoms they dwell !

The shadow and sun-sparkle vanish,
The cloud and the light fleet away,
But man from his heart may not banish
Even thoughts that are torment to stay.
When quenched is the glow of the ember,
When the life-fire ceases to burn,
Oh ! why should the spirit remember ?
Oh ! why should the parted return ?

During one of our brief holidays Charlotte was guest in a family who had known her father when he was curate in their parish. They were naturally inclined to show kindness to his daughter, but the kindness here took a form which was little agreeable. They had had no opportunity of knowing her abilities or disposition, and they took her shyness and smallness as indications of extreme youth. She was slow, very slow, to express any thing that bordered on ingratitude, but here she was mortified and hurt. "They took me for a child, and treated me just like one," she said. I can now recall the expression of that ever honest face as she added, "one tall lady *would* nurse me."

The tradition of a lady ghost who moved about in rustling silk in the upper stories of Roe Head had a great charm for Charlotte. She was a ready

listener to any girl who could relate stories of others having seen her ; but on Miss W. hearing us talk of our ghost, she adopted an effective measure for putting our belief in such an existence to the test, by selecting one or other from among us to ascend the stairs after the dimness of evening hours had set in, to bring something down which could easily be found. No ghost made herself visible even to the frightened imaginations of the foolish and the timid ; the whitened face of apprehension soon disappeared, nerves were braced, and a general laugh soon set us all right again.

It was while Charlotte was at school that she imbibed the germ of many of those characters which she afterward produced in "Shirley" ; but no one could have imagined that in the unceasing industry of her daily applications she was receiving any kind of impress external to her school-life.

She was particularly impressed with the goodness and saintliness of one of Miss W.'s guests, —the Miss Ainley of "Shirley," long since gone to her rest. The character is not of course a literal portrait, for the very reasons Charlotte herself gave. She said : " You are not to suppose any of the characters in 'Shirley' intended as literal portraits. It would not suit the rules of art nor of my own feelings to write in that style. We only suffer reality to *suggest*, never to *dictate*. Qualities I have seen, loved, and admired, are here and there put in as

decorative gems, to be preserved in that setting." I may remark here that nothing angered Charlotte more than for any one to suppose they could not be in her society without incurring the risk of "being put in her books." She always stoutly maintained she never thought of persons in this light when she was with them.

In the seldom recurring holidays Charlotte made sometimes short visits with those of her companions whose homes were within reach of school. Here she made acquaintance with the scenes and prominent characters of the Luddite period ; her father materially helped to fix her impressions, for he had held more than one curacy in the very neighborhood which she describes in "Shirley." He was present in some of the scenes, an active participator as far as his position permitted ; sometimes on the defensive, sometimes aiding the sufferers, uniting his strength and influence with the Mr. Helstone of "Shirley." Between these two men there seems to have been in some respects a striking affinity of character, which Charlotte was not slow to perceive, and she blended the two into one, though she never personally beheld the original of Mr. Helstone, except once when she was ten years old. He was a man of remarkable vigor and energy, both of mind and will. An absolute disciplinarian, he was sometimes called "Duke Ecclesiastic," a very Wellington in the Church.

Mr. Brontë used to delight in recalling the days he spent in the vicinity of this man. Many a breakfast hour he enlivened by his animated relations of his friend's unflinching courage and dauntless self-reliance, and how the ignorant and prejudiced population around misunderstood and misrepresented his worthiest deeds. In depicting the Luddite period Charlotte had the power of giving an almost literal description of the scenes then enacted, for, in addition to her father's personal acquaintance with what occurred, she had likewise the aid of authentic records of the eventful time, courteously lent to her by the editors of the *Leeds Mercury*.

I must not forget to state that no girl in the school was equal to Charlotte in Sunday lessons. Her acquaintance with Holy Writ surpassed others in this as in every thing else. She was very familiar with all the sublimest passages, especially those in Isaiah, in which she took great delight. Her confirmation took place while she was at school, and in her preparation for that, as in all other studies, she distinguished herself by application and proficiency.

At school she acquired that habit which she and her sisters kept up to the very last, that of pacing to and fro in the room. In days when out-of-door exercise was impracticable, Miss Wooler would join us in our evening hour of relaxation and converse (for which she had rare talent); her pupils used to hang about her as she walked up and down the

room, delighted to listen to her, or have a chance of being nearest in the walk. The last day Charlotte was at school she seemed to realize what a sedate, hard-working season it had been to her. She said: "I should for once like to feel *out and out* a school-girl; I wish something would happen! Let us run round the fruit garden [running was what she never did]; perhaps we shall meet some one, or we may have a fine for trespass." She evidently was longing for some never-to-be-forgotten incident. Nothing, however, arose from her little enterprise. She had to leave school as calmly and quietly as she had there lived.

Charlotte's first visit from Haworth was made about three months after she left school. She travelled in a two-wheeled gig, the only conveyance to be had in Haworth except the covered cart which brought her to school. Mr. Brontë sent Branwell as an escort; he was *then* a very dear brother, as dear to Charlotte as her own soul; they were in perfect accord of taste and feeling, and it was mutual delight to be together.

Branwell probably had never been far from home before; he was in wild ecstasy with every thing. He walked about in unrestrained boyish enjoyment, taking views in every direction of the old turret-roofed house, the fine chestnut-trees on the lawn (one tree especially interested him because it was "iron-garthed," having been split by storms,

but still flourishing in great majesty), and a large rookery, which gave to the house a good background—all these he noted and commented upon with perfect enthusiasm. He told his sister he “was leaving her in Paradise, and if she were not intensely happy she never would be !” Happy, indeed, she then was, *in himself*, for she, with her own enthusiasms, looked forward to what her brother’s great promise and talent might effect. He would at this time be between fifteen and sixteen years of age.

The visit passed without much to mark it (at this distance of time) except that we crept away together from household life as much as we could. Charlotte liked to pace the plantations or seek seclusion in the fruit garden ; she was safe from visitors in these retreats. She was so painfully shy she could not bear any special notice. One day, on being led in to dinner by a stranger, she trembled and nearly burst into tears ; but notwithstanding her excessive shyness, which was often painful to others as well as herself, she won the respect and affection of all who had opportunity enough to become acquainted with her.

Charlotte’s shyness did not arise, I am sure, either from vanity or self-consciousness, as some suppose shyness to arise ; its source was (as Mr. Arthur Helps says very truly in one of his recent essays) in her “not being understood.” She felt herself apart

from others ; they did not *understand* her, and she keenly felt the distance.

My first visit to Haworth was full of novelty and freshness. The scenery for some miles before we reached Haworth was wild and uncultivated, with hardly any population ; at last we came to what seemed a terrific hill, such a steep declivity no one thought of riding down it ; the horse had to be carefully led. We no sooner reached the foot of this hill than we had to begin to mount again, over a narrow, rough, stone-paved road ; the horses' feet seemed to catch at boulders, as if climbing. When we reached the top of the village there was apparently no outlet, but we were directed to drive into an entry which just admitted the gig ; we wound round in this entry and then saw the church close at hand, and we entered on the short lane which led to the parsonage gate-way. Here Charlotte was waiting, having caught the sound of the approaching gig. When greetings and introductions were over, Miss Branwell (the aunt of the Brontës) took possession of their guest and treated her with the care and solicitude due to a weary traveller. Mr. Brontë, also, was stirred out of his usual retirement by his own kind consideration, for not only the guest but the man-servant and the horse were to be made comfortable. He made inquiries about the man, of his length of service, etc., with the kind purpose of making a few moments of conversation agreeable to him.

Even at this time, Mr. Brontë struck me as looking very venerable, with his snow-white hair and powdered coat-collar. His manner and mode of speech always had the tone of high-bred courtesy. He was considered somewhat of an invalid, and always lived in the most abstemious and simple manner. His white cravat was not then so remarkable as it grew to be afterward. He was in the habit of covering this cravat himself. We never saw the operation, but we always had to wind for him the white sewing-silk which he used. Charlotte said it was her father's one extravagance—he cut up yards and yards of white lutestring (silk) in covering his cravat; and like Dr. Joseph Woolffe (the renowned and learned traveller), who, when on a visit and in a long fit of absence, “went into a clean shirt every day for a week, without taking one off,” so Mr. Brontë's cravat went into new silk and new size without taking any off, till at length nearly half his head was enveloped in cravat. His liability to bronchial attacks, no doubt, attached him to this increasing growth of cravat.

Miss Branwell was a very small, antiquated little lady. She wore caps large enough for half a dozen of the present fashion, and a front of light auburn curls over her forehead. She always dressed in silk. She had a horror of the climate so far north, and of the stone floors in the parsonage. She amused us by clicking about in pattens when-

ever she had to go into the kitchen or look after household operations.

She talked a great deal of her younger days ; the gayeties of her dear native town, Penzance, in Cornwall ; the soft, warm climate, etc. The social life of her younger days she used to recall with regret ; she gave one the idea that she had been a belle among her own home acquaintances. She took snuff out of a very pretty gold snuff-box, which she sometimes presented to you with a little laugh, as if she enjoyed the slight shock and astonishment visible in your countenance. In summer she spent part of the afternoon in reading aloud to Mr. Brontë. In the winter evenings she must have enjoyed this ; for she and Mr. Brontë had often to finish their discussions on what she had read when we all met for tea. She would be very lively and intelligent, and tilt arguments against Mr. Brontë without fear.

“Tabby,” the faithful, trustworthy old servant, was very quaint in appearance—very active, and, in these days, the general servant and factotum. We were all “childer” and “bairns,” in her estimation. She still kept to her duty of walking out with the “childer,” if they went any distance from home, unless Branwell were sent by his father as a protector. “Poor Tabby,” in later days, after she had been attacked with paralysis, would most anxiously look out for such duties as she was still

capable of. The postman was her special point of attention. She did not approve of the inspection which the younger eyes of her fellow-servant bestowed on his deliveries. She jealously seized them when she could, and carried them off with hobbling step, and shaking head and hand, to the safe custody of Charlotte.

Emily Brontë had by this time acquired a lithe-some, graceful figure. She was the tallest person in the house, except her father. Her hair, which was naturally as beautiful as Charlotte's, was in the same unbecoming tight curl and frizz; and there was the same want of complexion. She had very beautiful eyes—kind, kindling, liquid eyes: but she did not often look at you; she was too reserved. Their color might be said to be dark-gray, at other times dark-blue, they varied so. She talked very little. She and Anne were like twins—inseparable companions, and in the very closest sympathy, which never had any interruption.

Anne—dear, gentle Anne—was quite different in appearance from the others. She was her aunt's favorite. Her hair was a very pretty light brown, and fell on her neck in graceful curls. She had lovely violet-blue eyes, fine pencilled eyebrows, and clear, almost transparent complexion. She still pursued her studies, and especially her sewing, under the surveillance of her aunt. Emily had now begun to have the disposal of her own time.

Branwell studied regularly with his father, and used to paint in oils, which was regarded as study for what might be eventually his profession. All the household entertained the idea of his becoming an artist, and hoped he would be a distinguished one.

In fine and suitable weather delightful rambles were made over the moors, and down into the glens and ravines that here and there broke the monotony of the moorland. The rugged bank and rippling brook were treasures of delight. Emily, Anne, and Branwell used to ford the streams, and sometimes placed stepping-stones for the other two ; there was always a lingering delight in these spots,—every moss, every flower, every tint and form, were noted and enjoyed. Emily especially had a gleesome delight in these nooks of beauty,—her reserve for the time vanished. One long ramble made in these early days was far away over the moors, to a spot familiar to Emily and Anne, which they called “*The Meeting of the Waters.*” It was a small oasis of emerald-green turf, broken here and there by small clear springs ; a few large stones served as resting-places ; seated here, we were hidden from all the world, nothing appearing in view but miles and miles of heather, a glorious blue sky, and brightening sun. A fresh breeze wafted on us its exhilarating influence ; we laughed and made mirth of each other, and settled we would call ourselves the quartette.

Emily, half reclining on a slab of stone, played like a young child with the tadpoles in the water, making them swim about, and then fell to moralizing on the strong and the weak, the brave and the cowardly, as she chased them with her hand. No serious care or sorrow had so far cast its gloom on nature's youth and buoyancy, and nature's simplest offerings were fountains of pleasure and enjoyment.

The interior of the now far-famed parsonage lacked drapery of all kinds. Mr. Brontë's horror of fire forbade curtains to the windows ; they never had these accessories to comfort and appearance till long after Charlotte was the only inmate of the family sitting-room. She then ventured on the innovation when her friend was with her ; it did not please her father, but it was not forbidden.

There was not much carpet anywhere except in the sitting-room and on the study floor. The hall floor and stairs were done with sand-stone, always beautifully clean, as every thing was about the house ; the walls were not papered, but stained in a pretty dove-colored tint ; hair-seated chairs and mahogany tables, book-shelves in the study, but not many of these elsewhere. Scant and bare indeed, many will say, yet it was not a scantness that made itself felt. Mind and thought, I had almost said elegance, but certainly refinement, diffused themselves over all, and made nothing really wanting.

A little later on, there was the addition of a piano.

Emily, after some application, played with precision and brilliancy. Anne played also, but she preferred soft harmonies and vocal music. She sang a little ; her voice was weak, but very sweet in tone.

Mr. Brontë's health caused him to retire early. He assembled his household for family worship at eight o'clock ; at nine he locked and barred the front door, always giving, as he passed the sitting-room door, a kindly admonition to the " children " not to be late ; half way up the stairs he stayed his steps to wind up the clock, the clock that in after-days seemed to click like a dirge in the refrain of Longfellow's poem, " The Old Clock on the Stairs " :—

" Forever—never !
Never—forever ! "

Every morning was heard the firing of a pistol from Mr. Brontë's room window,—it was the discharging of the loading which was made every night. Mr. Brontë's tastes led him to delight in the perusal of battle-scenes, and in following the artifice of war ; had he entered on military service instead of ecclesiastical, he would probably have had a very distinguished career. The self-denials and privations of camp-life would have agreed entirely with his nature, for he was remarkably independent of the luxuries and comforts of life. The only dread he had was of *fire*, and this dread was so intense it caused him to prohibit all but silk or woollen dresses

for his daughters ; indeed, for any one to wear any other kind of fabric was almost to forfeit his respect.

Mr. Brontë at times would relate strange stories which had been told to him by some of the oldest inhabitants of the parish, of the extraordinary lives and doings of people who had resided in far-off, out-of-the-way places, but in contiguity with Haworth—stories which made one shiver and shrink from hearing ; but they were full of grim humor and interest to Mr. Brontë and his children, as revealing the characteristics of a class in the human race, and as such Emily Brontë has stereotyped them in her “Wuthering Heights.”

During Miss Branwell’s reign at the parsonage, the love of animals had to be kept in due subjection. There was then but one dog, which was admitted to the parlor at stated times. Emily and Anne always gave him a portion of their breakfast, which was, by their own choice, the old north-country diet of oat-meal porridge. Later on, there were three household pets : the tawny, strong-limbed “Keeper,” Emily’s favorite ; he was so completely under her control, she could quite easily make him spring and roar like a lion. She taught him this kind of occasional play without any coercion. “Flossy”—long, silky-haired black and white “Flossy”—was Anne’s favorite ; and black “Tom,” the tabby, was everybody’s favorite. It received such gentle treatment it seemed to have lost cat’s nature, and subsided into

luxurious amiability and contentment. The Brontës' love of dumb creatures made them very sensitive of the treatment bestowed upon them. For any one to offend in this respect was with them an infallibly bad sign, and a blot on the disposition.

The services in church in these days were such as can only be seen (if ever seen again) in localities like Haworth. The people assembled, but it was apparently to *listen*. Any part beyond that was quite out of their reckoning. All through the prayers a stolid look of apathy was fixed on the generalities of their faces. There they sat, or leaned in their pews ; some few, perhaps, were resting, after a long walk over the moors. The children, many of them in clogs (or sabots), pattered in from the school after service had commenced, and pattered out again before the sermon. The sexton, with a long staff, continually walked round in the aisles, "knobbing" sleepers when he dare, shaking his head at and threatening unruly children ; but when the sermon began there was a change. Attitudes took the listening forms, eyes were turned on the preacher. It was curious, now, to note the expression. A rustic, untaught intelligence, gleamed in their faces ; in some, a daring, doubting, questioning look, as if they would like to offer some defiant objection. Mr. Brontë always addressed his hearers in extempore style. Very often he selected a parable from one of the Gospels, which he explained in the

simplest manner—sometimes going over his own words and explaining them also, so as to be perfectly intelligible to the lowest comprehension.

The parishioners respected Mr. Brontë because, as one of them said, "he's a grand man; he lets other folks' business alone." No doubt Mr. Brontë's knowledge of human nature made him aware that this was the best course to pursue, till their independence had acquired a more civilized standard. There were exceptions, however, among them. Two or three individuals deserve particular note—they were men remarkable for self-culture and intelligence. One, it was said, vied with Mr. Brontë himself in his knowledge of the dead languages. He and another had, in addition to their mental stamina, such stalwart frames and stature they looked capable of doing duty as guards to the whole village. The third individual was an ailing, suffering man; but he wrote such a critique on Charlotte's writings when they became known, that it was valued more than any other coming from such a source. The villagers would have liked Tabby to talk to them about the family in the parsonage; but Tabby was invincible and impenetrable. When they asked her "if they were not fearfully larn'd," she left them in a "huff"; but she did not deny her "childer" the laugh she knew they would have if she told them the village query.

Haworth of the present day, like many other

secluded places, has made a step onward, in that it has now its railway station, and its institutions for the easy acquirement of learning, politics, and literature. The parsonage is quite another habitation from the parsonage of former days. The garden, which was nearly all grass, and possessed only a few stunted thorns and shrubs, and a few currant bushes which Emily and Anne treasured as their own bit of fruit garden, is now a perfect Arcadia of floral culture and beauty. At first the alteration, in spite of its improvement, strikes one with heartache and regret; for it is quite impossible, even in imagination, to people those rooms with their former inhabitants. But after-thought shows one the folly of such regret; for what the Brontës cared for and *lived* in most were the surroundings of nature, the free expanse of hill and mountain, the purple heather, the dells, and glens, and brooks, the broad sky view, the whistling winds, the snowy expanse, the starry heavens, and the charm of that solitude and seclusion which sees things from a distance without the disturbing atmosphere which lesser minds are apt to create. For it was not the seclusion of a *solitary* person, such as Charlotte endured in after-days, and which in time becomes awfully oppressive and injurious. It was solitude and seclusion shared and enjoyed with intelligent companionship and intense family affection.

A GOSSIP WITH MARTHA BROWN.

Although I have visited Haworth since the demolition of the old and the erection of the new church there [writes a correspondent of the *Yorkshireman*], and did so without cherishing any foregone prejudices concerning that "act of vandalism," as some were pleased to call the pulling down of the old sacred edifice, I must confess that it no longer possesses the charm that it did when the quaint old village was to be seen as in the days of the Brontës. The visit to Haworth of which I have now to speak, however, took place before Mr. Wade's system of "stamping out" the Brontë infatuation had fairly started. It was made at the request of an antiquarian friend of mine who was gathering materials for a work on Haworth which he was then writing, the chief object of his visit being to have an interview with Martha Brown, the faithful servant of the Brontës for many years, on matters associated with the history of that remarkable family.

Martha was but ten years old when she went to live at the parsonage. She was a native of Haworth, and her parents lived close against the church. Mrs. Gaskell has told us how she came to be one of the Brontë household. Old Tabby, the servant, had grown too old and feeble to be of much use,—a help-girl was needed, and Martha Brown was the chosen one. But a piece of diplomacy was necessary on the part of Charlotte (who was then a sort of mother

to the family) before Martha's duties could become clearly defined,—for it was with jealous reluctance that old Tabby, notwithstanding her age and infirmities, could be induced to relinquish any of the household duties that she claimed as exclusively her own. Peeling the potatoes for dinner was one of such duties, but from her partial blindness, she was unable to see and to cut out the black specks known as the “eyes” of the potato. “Miss Brontë was too dainty a house-keeper to put up with this, yet she could not bear to hurt the faithful old servant by bidding the younger maiden (Martha) go over the potatoes again, and so reminding Tabby that her work was less effectual than formerly. Accordingly she would steal into the kitchen and quietly carry off the bowl of vegetables without Tabby's being aware, and breaking off in the full flow of interest and inspiration in her writing (*‘Jane Eyre’*), carefully cut out the specks in the potatoes, and noiselessly carry them back to their place.”

Martha's recollection of her early life in the old parsonage was peculiarly vivid. Although she spoke in a quiet, subdued tone, her narrative would sometimes become animated and thrilling ; at others, deeply pathetic. Especially touching was her description of Charlotte's maternal anxiety for her younger sisters, and the strong attachment each had for the other. She told us also of the long rambles on the moors ; of the regular habits of in-door life ;

the putting away of all domestic work punctually at nine o'clock in the evening, and then beginning their literary studies, talking over the stories they were engaged upon, and describing their plots. "Many's the time that I have seen Miss Emily put down the tally-iron, as she was ironing the clothes, to scribble something on a piece of paper. Whatever she was doing, ironing or baking, she had her pencil and paper by her. I know now she was writing 'Wuthering Heights.'"

When old Tabby became so lame that she had to give up her work for a time, Charlotte and Emily, who were then at home, divided her duties betwixt them, the former doing the ironing and keeping the rooms clean, the latter baking and attending generally to the kitchen. "Poor Emily we always thought the best-looking, the cleverest, and the bravest-spirited of the three. Little did we think she would be the first to be taken away."

Martha had many interesting items treasured in her memory relating to Charlotte Brontë's literary career. When the news first came to Haworth that Miss Brontë was the author of "Jane Eyre" and "Shirley," Martha was the first to bring the news to the parsonage. She rushed into the house in the greatest excitement, exclaiming, "I've heard such news!" "What about?" inquired Miss Brontë. "Please, ma'am, you've been and written two books—the grandest books that ever was seen.

My father has heard it at Halifax, and Mr. T—, and Mr. G—, and Mr. M.—, at Bradford; they are going to have a meeting at the Mechanics Institute, to settle about ordering them."

It was just at the time when "Jane Eyre" was at the height of its popularity, and everybody was reading and talking about the wonderful book, that Martha and Miss Brontë, in the midst of their domestic labors, were having a bit of chat on general topics. The latter did not much care to talk about either herself or her book, but these were themes on which Martha could not be silent, and talk about them she would. "Well, Martha," said Charlotte, "I only hope the book may be worth all the fuss that is being made about it, but I am afraid it is not." Taking a practical view of the matter, and wishing to say something in the way of encouragement, Martha replied: "Oh, but you must please not forget the good your book must have done in supplying employment to so many people. Look at the printers, bookbinders, stationers, and others who have been benefited by its large sale." "Thank you, Martha, for putting it in that light," said Miss Brontë; "I am sure I had never thought of that."

Martha Brown assured us that Miss Brontë had been advised, on more than one occasion, to change her publishers, on the ground that the great popularity of her writings would now command a higher

figure than she had hitherto received. Charlotte, however, would not hear of this, and replied that Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. had been pleased to accept her manuscripts, after they had been rejected by the other publishing firms, and unless they forsook her she would never forsake them.

Mr. Brontë, it would seem, was very indignant at what had been said in certain quarters respecting "Wuthering Heights" having been the joint production of Emily and Branwell Brontë. He maintained that Branwell had had no part or share whatever in the book. Indeed, the very fact of Emily being engaged upon such a work had purposely been kept from him as a profound secret.

Equally indignant was Martha Brown at the hard things that had been said about old Mr. Brontë by Mrs. Gaskell and others. "A kinder man could not be, although he was sometimes queer and reserved before strangers." As to his discharging pistols into the air in order to let off his tempers, there was not the slightest truth in that. "Mr. Brontë was always fond of fire-arms," she said. "He had acquired the fondness from his having been a volunteer while at college." She never saw him discharge one in a passion.

It was Martha Brown's loving duty to wait upon her mistress during her illness. Very touching was her narrative of the last moments of the brave and patient sufferer. Even when utterly prostrated by

weakness and pain, her thoughts were occupied more with anxiety for the old man, who was so soon to be left desolate, than by her own intense sufferings. When she heard him coming up-stairs to see her she would ask Martha to let her sit up a moment, and would then strain every nerve to give him a pleasing reception. On his entering the room she would greet him with: "See, papa, I am looking a little better." The old man would then retire, trying to look comforted, while the poor patient would fall back upon her pillow almost exhausted by the effort she had made.

Martha Brown remained with the bereaved parent till his death in 1861, and was one of the sorrowful mourners who followed him to his grave.

Miss Brown had treasured up some valuable and interesting mementos of the Brontë family, several of which had been given to her by Mr. Brontë. It afforded her apparently as much pleasure to exhibit these as it did us to look them over. Among the more interesting of these relics was an old portfolio filled with the pencil drawings and water-color sketches of Branwell and his three sisters. But still more valuable than these, to our mind, were the mimic magazines in Charlotte's handwriting, written in such small characters as to be scarcely readable without the aid of a glass. The writing of these miniature volumes, Mrs. Gaskell says, had the effect of injuring Charlotte's eyesight for a

time. Then there were some letters from the great *litterati* with whom Miss Brontë had corresponded—Thackeray, Harriet Martineau, and others. We noticed an epistle from the great humorist in which he alluded to his intended visit to Bradford, to give his lecture on “The Four Georges.”

Martha, as may be readily imagined, had had many opportunities of parting with her treasures had she been wishful to do so. She had the good sense, however, not to part with them indiscriminately. The curious may be interested to know that since her death they have been apportioned amongst her surviving relatives.

HARRIET MARTINEAU'S REMINISCENCES OF
CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

On the last evening of my stay at Mr. Knight's, a parcel arrived for me enclosing a book, and a note which was examined as few notes ever are. The book was “Shirley,” and the note was from “Currer Bell.” Here it is :

Currer Bell offers a copy of “Shirley” to Miss Martineau's acceptance, in acknowledgment of the pleasure and profit *she* [sic] he has derived from her works. When C. B. first read “Dearbrook,” he tasted a new and keen pleasure, and experienced a genuine benefit. In his mind, “Dearbrook” ranks with the writings that have really done him good, added to his stock of ideas, and rectified his views of life.

November 7, 1849.

We examined this note to make out whether it was written by a man or a woman. The hand was a cramped and nervous one, which might belong to any one who had written too much, or was in bad health, or who had been badly taught. The erased "she" seemed at first to settle the matter; but somebody suggested that the "she" might refer to me under a form of sentence which might easily have been changed in the penning. I had made up my mind, as I had repeatedly said, that a certain passage in "Jane Eyre," "about sewing on brass rings," could have been written only by a woman or by an upholsterer. I now addressed my reply externally to "Currer Bell, Esq.," and began it "Madam." I had more reason for interest than even the deeply-interested public in knowing who wrote "Jane Eyre": for, when it appeared, I was taxed with the authorship by more than one personal friend, and charged by others, and even by relatives, with knowing the author, and having supplied some of the facts of the first volume from my own childhood. When I read it, I was convinced that it was by some friend of my own, who had portions of my childish experience in his or her mind. "Currer Bell" told me long after that she had read with astonishment those parts of "Household Education" which relate my own experience. It was like meeting her own fetich, —so precisely were the fears and miseries there described the same as her own, told or not told in "Jane Eyre."

A month after my receipt of "Shirley," I removed on a certain Saturday from the house of a friend in Hyde Park Street, to that of a cousin in Westbourne Street, in time for a dinner party. Meanwhile, a messenger was running about to find me, and reached my cousin's when we were at dessert, bringing the following note :

December 8, 1849.

MY DEAR MADAM :—I happen to be staying in London for a few days, and having just heard that you are likewise in town, I could not help feeling a very strong wish to see you. If you will permit me to call upon you, have the goodness to tell me when to come. Should you prefer calling on me my address is ———. Do not think this request springs from mere curiosity. I hope it has its origin in a better feeling. It would grieve me to lose this chance of seeing one whose works have so often made her the subject of my thoughts.

I am, my dear madam,

Yours sincerely,

CURRER BELL.

My host and hostess desired me to ask the favor of C. B.'s company the next day, or any subsequent one. According to the old Dissenting custom of early hours on Sundays, we should have tea at six the next evening; on any other day, dinner at a somewhat later hour. The servant was sent with this invitation on Sunday morning, and brought back the following reply :

MY DEAR MADAM :—I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at six o'clock to-day :—and I shall try now to be patient till six o'clock comes. I am, etc., etc.

“This is a woman’s note,” we agreed. We were in a certain state of excitement all day, and especially toward evening. The footman would certainly announce the mysterious personage by his or her right name ; and as I could not hear the announcement, I charged my cousins to take care that I was duly informed of it. A little before six there was a thundering rap ; the drawing-room door was thrown open, and in stalked a gentleman six feet high. It was not Curren, but a philanthropist, who had an errand about a model lodging-house. Minute by minute I, for one, wished him away, and he did go before any one else came. Precisely as the time-piece struck six, a carriage stopped at the door ; and after a minute of suspense, the footman announced “Miss Brogden ” ; whereupon my cousin informed me that it was Miss Brontë ; for we had heard the name before, among others, in the way of conjecture. I thought her the smallest creature I had ever seen (except at a fair), and her eyes blazed, as it seemed to me. She glanced quickly round ; and my trumpet pointing me out, held out her hand frankly and pleasantly. I introduced her, of course, to the family, and then came a moment which I had not anticipated. When she was seated by me on the sofa, she cast up at me such a look,—so loving, so appealing,—that in connection with her deep mourning dress, and the knowledge that she was the sole survivor of her family, I could with the utmost

difficulty return her smile, or keep my composure. I should have been heartily glad to cry. We soon got on very well, and she appeared more at her ease that evening than I ever saw her afterward, except when we were alone. My hostess was so considerate as to leave us together after tea, in case of C. B. desiring to have private conversation with me. She was glad of the opportunity to consult me about certain strictures of the reviewers which she did not understand, and had every desire to profit by. I did not approve the spirit of those strictures ; but I thought them not entirely groundless. She besought me then, and repeatedly afterward, to tell her, at whatever cost of pain to herself, if I saw her afford any justification of them. I believed her (and I now believe her to have been) perfectly sincere ; but when the time came (on the publication of "Villette," in regard to which she had expressly claimed my promise a week before the book arrived) she could not bear it. There was never any quarrel, or even misunderstanding, between us. She thanked me for my sincere fulfilment of my engagement, but she could not, she said, come "at present" to see me, as she had promised : and the present was, alas ! all that she had to dispose of. She is dead, before another book of hers could (as I hoped it would) enable her to see what I meant, and me to re-establish a fuller sympathy between us. Between the appearance of "Shirley" and that of "Vil-

lette," she came to me in December, 1850. Our intercourse then confirmed my deep impression of her integrity, her noble conscientiousness about her vocation, and her consequent self-reliance in the moral conduct of her life. I saw at the same time tokens of a morbid condition of mind, in one or two directions;—much less than might have been expected, or than would have been seen in almost any one else under circumstances so unfavorable to health of body and mind as those in which she lived; and the one fault which I pointed out to her in "Villette" was so clearly traceable to these unwholesome influences that I would fain have been spared a task of criticism which could hardly be of much use while the circumstances remained unchanged. But she had exacted first the promise and then the performance in this particular instance; and I had no choice. "I know," she wrote (January 21, 1853), "that you will give me your thoughts upon my book,—as frankly as if you spoke to some near relative whose good you preferred to her gratification. I wince under the pain of condemnation—like any other weak structure of flesh and blood; but I love, I honor, I kneel to Truth. Let her smite me on one cheek—good! the tears may spring to the eyes, but courage! There is the other side—hit again—right sharply!" This was the genuine spirit of the woman. She might be

weak for once, but her permanent temper was one of humility, candor, integrity, and conscientiousness. She was not only unspoiled by her sudden and prodigious fame, but obviously unspoilable. She was somewhat amused by her fame, but oftener annoyed ;—at least when obliged to come out into the world to meet it, instead of its meeting her in her secluded home in the wilds of Yorkshire.

AN ANECDOTE OF MISS BRONTË.

How clearly and vividly, how minutely in all their circumstances and details do some persons we had formerly known present themselves to the imagination, as though not years and months, but scarcely weeks or days, had supervened ! A fragile form is now before my mind's eye as distinctly as it was in reality more than twenty years ago ! The slender figure is seated by the fire in the drawing-room of Mr. G. S., the publisher of a novel which had brought the author at one bound to the top of popular admiration. There had been a dinner party, and all the literary men whom the lady had expressed a desire to meet had been requested to respect the publisher's desire, and the lady's desire, that she should remain "unknown" as to her public position. Nobody was to know that this was the authoress of "Jane Eyre." She was simply Miss Brontë on a visit to the family of her host. The

dinner party went off as gayly as could be expected where several people are afraid of each other without quite knowing why, and Miss Brontë sat very modestly and rather on her guard, but quietly taking the measure of *les monstres de talent*, who were talking, and taking wine, and sometimes bantering each other. Once only she issued from her shell, with brightening looks, when somebody made a slightly disparaging remark concerning the Duke of Wellington, for whom Miss Brontë declared she had the highest admiration ; and she appeared quite ready to do battle with one gentleman who smilingly suggested that perhaps it was "because the Duke was an Irishman."

Now it should be premised that the writer of this had sent a presentation copy of a certain poem, addressed in complimentary, but very earnest, terms, to the "Author of 'Jane Eyre'"—the lady whose *nom-de-plume* was "Currer Bell," and whose real name we were not to know. To this she had replied with a note, which concluded with these words :—

How far the applause of critics has rewarded the author of "Orion" I do not know ; but I think the pleasure he enjoyed in its composition must have been a bounteous meed in itself. You could not, I imagine, have written that poem without at times deriving deep happiness from your work. With sincere thanks for the pleasure it has afforded me,

I remain, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

C. BELL.

On joining the ladies in the drawing-rooms, our host requested the writer to take the seat beside Miss Brontë. The moment he did so she turned toward him with the most charming artlessness, exclaiming: "I was so much obliged to you, Mr. Horne, for sending me your——" She checked herself with an inward start, having thus at once exploded her Currer-Bell secret, by identifying herself with the "Author of 'Jane Eyre.'" She looked embarrassed. "Ah, Miss Brontë," whispered the innocent cause of the not very serious misfortune, "you would never do for treasons and stratagems." She nodded acquiescently, but with a degree of vexation and self-reproach. Shortly after this, Mr. S., overhearing some conversation between us which showed him that the secret was "out," took an early opportunity of calling me aside, when he extended both hands, with an *et tu Brute* look, and began to complain of my breach of the general understanding. I, of course, explained what the lady had said, at the *naïveté* of which he was not a little astonished and amused.

THE LAST SKETCH.



Not many days since I went to visit a house where in former years I had received many a friendly welcome. We went into the owner's—an artist's—studio. Prints, pictures, and sketches hung on the walls as I had last seen and remembered them.

The implements of the painter's art were there. The light which had shone upon so many, many hours of patient and cheerful toil, poured through the northern window upon print and bust, lay figure and sketch, and upon the easel before which the good, the gentle, the beloved Leslie labored. In this room the busy brain had devised, and the skilful hand executed, I know not how many of the noble works which have delighted the world with their beauty and charming humor. Here the poet called up into pictorial presence, and informed with life, grace, beauty, infinite friendly mirth and wondrous naturalness of expression, the people of whom his dear books told him the stories—his Shakespeare, his Cervantes, his Molière, his Le Sage. There was his last work on the easel—a beautiful fresh-smiling shape of Titania, such as his sweet, guileless fancy imagined the "Midsummer Night's" queen to be. Gracious, and pure, and bright, the sweet-smiling image glimmers on the canvas. Fairy elves, no doubt, were to have been grouped around their mistress in laughing clusters. Honest Bottom's grotesque head and form are indicated as reposing by the side of the consummate beauty. The darkling forest would have grown around them, with the stars glittering from the midsummer sky : the flowers at the queen's feet, and the boughs and foliage about her, would have been peopled with gambolling sprites and fays.

They were dwelling in the artist's mind no doubt, and would have been developed by that patient, faithful, admirable genius : but the busy brain stopped working, the skilful hand fell lifeless, the loving, honest heart ceased to beat. What was she to have been—that fair Titania—when perfected by the patient skill of the poet, who in imagination saw the sweet, innocent figure, and with tender courtesy and caresses, as it were, posed and shaped and traced the fair form ? Is there record kept anywhere of fancies conceived, beautiful, unborn ? Some day will they assume form in some yet undeveloped light ? If our bad, unspoken thoughts are registered against us, and are written in the awful account, will not the good thoughts unspoken, the love and tenderness, the pity, beauty, charity, which pass through the breast and cause the heart to throb with silent good, find a remembrance too ? A few weeks more, and this lovely offspring of the poet's conception would have been complete—to charm the world with its beautiful mirth. May there not be some sphere unknown to us where it may have an existence ? They say our words, once out of our lips, go travelling in *omne ævum*, reverberating for ever and ever. If our words, why not our thoughts ? If the Has Been, why not the Might Have Been ?

Some day our spirits may be permitted to walk in galleries of fancies more wondrous and beautiful

than any achieved works which at present we see, and our minds to behold and delight in masterpieces which poets' and artists' minds have fathered and conceived only.

With a feeling much akin to that with which I looked upon the friend's—the admirable artist's—unfinished work, I can fancy many readers turning to the last pages which were traced by Charlotte Brontë's hand. Of the multitude that have read her books, who has not known and deplored the tragedy of her family, her own most sad and untimely fate? Which of her readers has not become her friend? Who that has known her books has not admired the artist's noble English, the burning love of truth, the bravery, the simplicity, the indignation at wrong, the eager sympathy, the pious love and reverence, the passionate honor, so to speak, of the woman? What a story is that of that family of poets in their solitude yonder on the gloomy northern moors! At nine o'clock at night, Mrs. Gaskell tells, after evening prayers, when their guardian and relative had gone to bed, the three poetesses—the three maidens, Charlotte, and Emily, and Anne—Charlotte being the “motherly friend and guardian to the other two,”—“began, like restless wild animals, to pace up and down their parlor, ‘making out’ their wonderful stories, talking over plans and projects, and thoughts of what was to be their future life.”

One evening, at the close of 1854, as Charlotte Nicholls sat with her husband by the fire, listening to the howling of the wind about the house, she suddenly said to her husband: "If you had not been with me, I must have been writing now." She then ran upstairs, and brought down and read aloud, the beginning of a new tale. When she had finished, her husband remarked, "The critics will accuse you of repetition." She replied, "Oh! I shall alter that. I always begin two or three times before I can please myself." But it was not to be. The trembling little hand was to write no more. The heart, newly awakened to love and happiness, and throbbing with maternal hope, was soon to cease to beat; that intrepid outspoker and champion of truth, that eager, impetuous redresser of wrong, was to be called out of the world's fight and struggle, to lay down the shining arms, and to be removed to a sphere where even a noble indignation *cor ulterius nequit lacerare*, and where truth complete, and right triumphant, no longer need to wage war.

I can only say of this lady, *vidi tantum*. I saw her first just as I rose out of an illness from which I had never thought to recover. I remember the trembling little frame, the little hand, the great honest eyes. An impetuous honesty seemed to me to characterize the woman. Twice I recollect she took me to task for what she held to be errors in doctrine. Once about Fielding we had a disputa-

tion. She spoke her mind out. She jumped too rapidly to conclusions. (I have smiled at one or two passages in the "Biography," in which my own disposition or behavior forms the subject of talk.) She formed conclusions that might be wrong, and built up whole theories of character upon them. New to the London world, she entered it with an independent, indomitable spirit of her own; and judged of contemporaries, and especially spied out arrogance or affectation, with extraordinary keenness of vision. She was angry with her favorites if their conduct or conversation fell below her ideal. Often she seemed to me to be judging the London folk prematurely: but perhaps the city is rather angry at being judged. I fancied an austere little Joan of Arc marching in upon us, and rebuking our easy lives, our easy morals. She gave me the impression of being a very pure, and lofty, and high-minded person. A great and holy reverence of right and truth seemed to be with her always. Such, in our brief interview, she appeared to me. As one thinks of that life so noble, so lonely—of that passion for truth—of those nights and nights of eager study, swarming fancies, invention, depression, elation, prayer; as one reads the necessarily incomplete, though most touching and admirable, history of the heart that throbbed in this one little frame—of this one amongst the myriads of souls that have lived and died on this great earth—this great earth?—

this little speck in the infinite universe of God,— with what wonder do we think of to-day, with what awe await to-morrow, when that which is now but darkly seen shall be clear ! As I read this little fragmentary sketch, I think of the rest. Is it ? And where is it ? Will not the leaf be turned some day, and the story be told ? Shall the deviser of the tale somewhere perfect the history of little EMMA'S griefs and troubles ? Shall TITANIA come forth complete with her sportive court, with the flowers at her feet, the forest around her, and all the stars of summer glittering overhead ?

How well I remember the delight, and wonder, and pleasure with which I read "Jane Eyre," sent to me by an author whose name and sex were then alike unknown to me ; the strange fascinations of the book ; and how with my own work pressing upon me, I could not, having taken the volumes up, lay them down until they were read through ! Hundreds of those who, like myself, recognized and admired that master-work of a great genius, will look with a mournful interest and regard and curiosity upon the last fragmentary sketch from the noble hand which wrote "Jane Eyre."

CHAPTER VI.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

The recollections of an attaché under Irving—John Esten Cooke's visit to Irving at Sunnyside—Theodore Tilton's interview.

OUR budget of reminiscences of the genial gentleman whose name heads this chapter consists in the first place of the "Recollections" of Robert M. Walsh, who in 1831, at the age of eighteen, was an attaché to the American Legation in London, of which Irving was the Secretary. This paper originally appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine*. The next article, "Irving at Sunnyside in 1858," was contributed by the Southern novelist, John Esten Cooke, to the now extinct monthly, *Hours at Home*; and the last one was written for the *The Independent*, by Theodore Tilton, a few weeks before the death of "Geoffrey Crayon."

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ATTACHÉ.

In my time the United States Legation in London consisted of Louis McLane as Minister, Washington

Irving as Secretary, and several attachés. Two such representatives abroad the country has not often had together. Mr. McLane was a man of sterling worth in every respect, a thorough gentleman and a statesman of rare clearness and strength of intellect. As Representative, Senator, Ambassador, and Cabinet Minister, he is one of the nation's "precious possessions," to use the phrase of Disraeli about Lord John. The quiet dignity of his manners made him peculiarly acceptable to the society in which he was called to move, and induced it to pay him attentions which few American envoys have received. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen, the then heads of the British Ministry, were especially marked in their civilities, going far beyond mere official requirement. As to Irving, it may be said that he was the *enfant gâté* of the brightest and highest circles, the literary and fashionable worlds both striving to do him honor. His intimacy with Moore, Campbell, and other demigods of fame brought them often to Mr. McLane's house, and I can see now the former immortal seated at the piano, his feet scarcely touching the carpet, warbling some ballad which perhaps he had just composed, or standing in enthusiastic admiration near a harp on which a young American damsel used to play with marvellous skill. With Campbell, boy as I was, I got to be on quite friendly terms, in consequence of a little article for his

magazine which he was good enough to publish—and to pay for. Certainly no honorarium was ever received with keener satisfaction; *acceptissima semper munera sunt, auctor quæ preciosa facit*. Five guineas from the Bard of Hope were more for a juvenile scribbler than fifty, say, from Mr. Smith, especially with such a kind note as that which accompanied them. The goodness of Campbell's heart was somewhat obscured by the sharpness of his tongue, which was not at all merciful to those whom he disliked; and accordingly he was not a general favorite. Miss Landon, I remember, whom I made the acquaintance of and danced with at an evening party, was quite satirical at his expense, turning a blue coat with brilliant buttons, worn by him with great apparent complacency, into endless shapes of fun. A delightful talker, by the way, was L. E. L., and I certainly did not anticipate her mournful career while listening to her quips and cranks and admiring her wreathed smiles. At that time she had just become famous, and was doubtless revelling in all those golden exhalations of the dawn which a poetess must enjoy more vividly than any one else. There are so many celebrated men, and so few celebrated women, that the sensation of *rara-avisism* must be superlatively delicious for the latter when personal fascinations are combined with mental charms. How proud I felt when she took my hobbledehoy arm and

allowed me to put her into her carriage when she left what has been more than once sweetly described as the gay and festive scene ! At that time, as seen now by the light of other days, she was plump, pretty, pleasant, piquant ; and the live, everlasting love, which her initials were said to stand for, and her verse so abundantly exhaled, was as imperceptible in her talk as if she had been "suckled by Hyrcanian tigers."

Another authoress whom I recall in conjunction with Campbell was a lady with a superb physique and a hideous name (none other than Crump), which, in spite of her beauty, she never changed, although she was then said to be affianced to the widowed poet, by whom she was certainly much admired. One of her novels, "Geraldine of Desmond," was quite equal to the average fictions of the present day, though it has long since gone to where they will soon go ; and some of her rhymes were agreeable to the ear, as, for instance, this couplet :

" Now rising with joy on a heaven-kissing wave,
Now sinking where hope finds a sorrowful grave."

Years afterward I met her in Paris, at the residence of Fenimore Cooper, who seemed to hold her in esteem, but, alas ! she was fat and fifty, and not at all fair, and quite dispelled the illusion that a thing of beauty is a joy forever. The most intimate friends of Campbell were the Siddons family.

Through his mediation a reconciliation had been effected between them and Sir Thomas Lawrence, who had faithlessly flirted with one of the daughters of the great actress (for he was the most coquettish of males, as well as the least masculine of painters); and in honor thereof the poet gave a fête to which the whole Legation was bidden, but to which its humblest member could not go on account of a spiteful grippe. He heard it, however, described as a most interesting and delightful reunion, one feature of which was the presence of Fanny Kemble, then in the first blaze of her histrionic glory. What an excitement, to be sure, there was about that distinguished damsel—the niece of her aunt as decidedly as was Louis Napoleon the nephew of his uncle! and what interest was lent to her performances by the spectacle of the grand old lady in one of the boxes near the stage, encouraging and sympathizing with her splendid development of hereditary genius.

When Moore published his life of Byron, Campbell took up the cudgels quite fiercely for Lady B.; and in reference to the dispute I heard Mr. Irving say that he had read the famous autobiography, and his impression, I think, was favorable to the husband—at least so far as to believe that general incompatibility, rather than any specific crime, was the cause of the rupture.

The kindness of Mr. Irving to the younger mem-

bers of the Legation was unceasing, and amply compensated them for the extra work of copying which his literary position obliged them to perform. "Geoffrey Crayon," of course, Secretary though he might be, could not be called upon to play amanuensis to any chief however distinguished. But he took great interest in the official business, making it pleasant by his genial ways and not infrequent jests. Once, upon a busy despatch-day, he had been amused by the over-zealousness of one of us, and when all the documents were off, he turned to the eager youth, and, with merry twinkle of eye, exclaimed: "Well, sir, through in excellent time—in *spite* of your assistance." The only things that bothered him in the diplomatic household were the uncapped heads of the female servants, who had been brought from America; and he made various attempts to persuade them to imitate the English "maids" with their tidy caps, but was, of course, ignominiously repulsed. *Helps* necessarily scorned the idea of looking like the down-trodden menials of aristocratic despotism. No little amusement was caused by a bright mulatto body-servant, whose dislike to his handsome livery was at last found to proceed from the fact that he had passed himself off in a certain class of society, by no means the lowest, as an African prince on his travels! The fib he had no scruples about telling, but it went terribly against his conscience to be found out.

The drowsiness which used to overcome Mr. Irving at table must have been a serious interference with his social enjoyment. He would go off so easily that, if conversing with him at the moment, you might go on with the conversation for a while after he had become totally unconscious. This happened to him once in Lord Aberdeen's house, to the consternation, doubtless, of the disciplined diplomats in Mr. Irving's neighborhood. His kindly lordship, however, would not permit the well-beloved Geoffrey to be disturbed, so that he had his nap comfortably out. Sometimes, when he woke, he would take up the conversation around him where it had been broken off by his doze, although meanwhile it might have wandered into a very different subject ; which of course would produce rather a comic effect, that no one would appreciate better than himself. It was impossible for him to resist the drowsiness, the tendency of blood to his head being such that his physician used to say that apoplexy would be the cause of his death—a prediction, however, which was not fulfilled. The infirmity was so well known and understood that it had become a matter of sympathetic interest, rather than annoyance, with his entertainers. His delightful talk before and after his Homeric nods, combined with his reputation, was ample recompense for any unavoidable infringement of social convenances.

One dinner, indeed, I recollect, at which Irving

had no attack, but was uninterruptedly in his pleasantest mood, owing to the hour and the circumstances under which it was eaten, and the fact, perhaps, that he had had his forty winks beforehand. He and Mr. McLane had gone to the House of Commons, leaving word that they would be back to dinner, which was accordingly kept waiting until after midnight, the debate having proved of special interest. Irving was in the highest spirits, and went on talking in the true Knickerbocker vein until almost cockcrow. Among the stories he told was one of a little dancing-dog he had met in Andalusia, giving so ludicrous a picture of its performance and the doings of its excitable master that Mr. McLane was nearly put into hysterics. The next morning, at breakfast, he indulged in emphatic vituperation of "that dog" for hindering his sleep, complaining bitterly that every time he closed his eyes he would see the little beast, with its drooping paws and pathetic phiz, cutting the most frantic capers on its hinder legs, so as to compel him to shout in a way that put all slumber to flight.

Among Mr. Irving's acquaintance, to whom he introduced me, was a pleasant and portly publisher, at whose hospitable table I once met a large assemblage of authors, of whom the most interesting—certainly the most amusing—was Thomas Hood. He was a very dry-looking specimen of the literati, and his appearance was any thing but in-

dicative of fun. He had no continuous conversation, but sat watching his opportunity until something enabled him to pounce on a joke, after which he would retreat into silence and await the next chance. "Capital Sauterne this!" exclaimed an enthusiastic bibbler. "Quite right," said Hood; "it's not the trash that does so turn your stomach." The walk of some personage was described as giving the idea that he had the stone: "A sort of gravel walk," ejaculated the joker. The merits of Stuart Newton, the painter, were discussed, and some one remarked that his defect was want of shade. "Just so," replied the inveterate; "God said, let Newton be, and all was *light*"; and so on till the guests departed. If the jests were unduly successful, it was owing not a little to the uproarious delight of the jolly host, who, almost before they were uttered, would shout, "How funny!" and shake his fat sides with most infectious vigor. Poor Yorick! his must have been melancholy mirth for such as were conversant with his inner life, the marks of which were plain enough on his careworn face and attenuated frame.

IRVING AT SUNNYSIDE IN 1858.

Among the most pleasant of all my recollections, is a day which I spent with Washington Irving, at Sunnyside, in the summer of 1858.

From childhood, the good Geoffrey Crayon had been for me a purveyor of delights, a lord of wonders, the possessor of an Aladdin's Lamp which opened for me all the treasures of the world of fancy. It was in an old country-house, not far from the spot where I now write, that the magician came to me, in those callow years which dower the memory with so many images, not to be erased—and the “wizard's volume” was a series of old brown-backed pamphlets labelled “The Sketch-Book,” published by a certain “C. S. Van Winkle, printer, 101 Greenwich Street”; one of which lies before me now.

That every thing in the “Sketch-Book” was absolutely true, admitted of no manner of doubt, for was not “C. S. Van Winkle” plainly a descendant of the immortal Rip, in whose adventures, as veritable occurrences, I firmly believed? The very appearance of the book—the broad black type, meandering, narrow-paged, though wide white margins—had an air of historical verity about it. It was obviously no romance, but a true history; and as I look now at the old brown-covered *editio princeps*, I seem to return to the years of youth and credulity! Such was the impression produced upon me by the book containing the adventures of Rip Van Winkle, and Ichabod Crane, immortal rival of Brom Bones, in the affections of the fair Katrina of Sleepy Hollow; and even the masterly illustrations of Felix

Darley, subsequently, could not make the images more distinct. The "Tales of a Traveller" deepened the spell and heightened my admiration of the wizard who evoked those wild or comic figures. Wondrous was the power of the magician who "raised" for my delectation the German Student, the Bold Dragoon, the Mysterious Italian, and the weird people who took part in the wild Furniture Dance. They all took irresistible hold upon the imagination, and became a part of the life of the dreaming child, playing over the flower-decorated meadows of "Glengarry," or toiling up the great staircase at night, half expecting some form of *diablerie* to start from the closet on the landing, where a mysterious "White Lady" was said to reside, and glide out unawares upon small urchins travelling that way unattended. When long afterward there came sufficient demonstration of the fact that Geoffrey Crayon, purveyor of mysterious delights, and king of Faëry Land, was only plain Washington Irving, Esq., citizen of New York—a mere every-day mortal, wearing an ordinary coat and hat like other commonplace individuals—I think the thing looked rather tame and poor to me: the result "stale, flat, and unprofitable." The poetry of life was reduced to the dullest prose. Where was the mystery, the wonder, the romance of Rip, and Ichabod, and Tom Walker, when I discovered that these histories were only the fancies

of a poor American youth, shipwrecked upon the waves of London, and writing for his bread? So all the splendor disappeared; the down was rubbed from the peach; the pea was stripped of its blossom; Geoffrey Crayon, the magician, had buried his wand and his book, many fathoms deep, and would never more return. Fair days of childhood in the long dead years! Green fields, bright skies, fairy dreams of earlier years! What a pity that the sun shines less brightly now, and so many weeds have choked the gay roses! With the blue and the red, of sky and flower, passed away the rose color around those fancies of the magician. When I heard of him again, the famous Mr. Crayon was eating a great dinner on his return to New York from foreign travel; and then came the grave, staid volumes of the "Life of Washington." Geoffrey Crayon was then dead and buried; and Washington Irving, Esq., reigned in his stead.

I have attempted to convey some idea of my feeling for Irving, and if the reader has comprehended my meaning, he will understand why I greatly desired to make his personal acquaintance. The opportunity, however, never occurred until the summer of 1858, when, chancing to be in New York, I said one day to D——, the kindest of friends and most delightful of companions: "I want to go and see Irving." He was living at Sunnyside, within an hour's travel, and I had de-

terminated to see him, although I was without a letter of introduction, and might be regarded as an intruder. This obstacle was happily removed by D——, who knew Mr. Irving well; and he agreed at once to go with me to Sunnyside. It was a bright day of June, I think, when we left the cars at Tarrytown, near at hand, and a short walk brought us to the grounds, which were one mass of flowers, grass, and foliage. Embowered in this foliage, and margined by flowers, rose before us, on a gentle acclivity, the queer, *outré*, picturesque, delightfully Dutch house of Irving.

It was an odd affair of steep roofs, gable ends, and decorated eaves—a sort of cottage half covered with flowers and climbing vines, upon the summit of which stood a queer-looking weathercock, which I understood to be an old Dutch relic from Albany. On the left was a portico, from which you had a fine glimpse of the Hudson; winding walks led in and out of the shrubbery, and the place resembled a sort of Dutch Paradise—all grass, birds, flowers, and sunshine. Hither, within a few miles of Sleepy Hollow, scene of the adventures of Ichabod Crane, and not far from the Catskills, immortalized by the mishaps of Rip Van Winkle, the creator of those personages had come to spend his tranquil and happy old age—proclaiming to the world in his very house, and the choice of its site, those odd, humorous, half Dutch peculiari-

ties which had communicated such a charm to his writings and made the author so famous.

I was looking curiously at the original structure, when my eyes fell upon the figure of a man standing upon a knoll to the left of the house, his face turned studiously away from us. My friend directed his steps in that direction. I followed, and "How do you do, Mr. Irving?" caused the figure to wheel round, walking-stick in hand. It was that of a short, rather "dumpy" person, dressed in black, and very plainly. There was absolutely nothing to indicate taste or character in the costume, nor was there much, at first sight, in the face. A plain, elderly gentleman, taking a walk in his grounds, and enjoying the sunshine—such was the face and figure of Irving. But over this calm face there passed all at once a smile which seemed to change its whole character: he advanced quickly, and greeted us with the greatest cordiality, inquiring with the most affectionate solicitude after his friends in Virginia. A sly smile then flitted over his face, and, with a short laugh, he said to D—:

"I saw you coming, but I thought you were some of those people from New York. They are always coming up to see me—entire strangers—and annoy me."

In fact, as I afterward learned, this was a severe infliction; and Irving complained of it with comic pathos. "They come at all hours, without cere-

mony," he said; "people whom I never saw or heard of. Mr. Smith of Texas walks in, sends up his compliments, and when I shake hands I find myself gazed at like a show. Mr. Smith of Texas evidently expects me to say something brilliant, and when I don't, considers himself defrauded." A friend, one day in a book-store, was accosted by a stranger who took up a volume of Irving's works, and said: "A great author, sir, a very great author! I consider him national property, and being near Sunnyside lately, *I called to get my dividend!*" I can fancy the quiet, shy, retiring Geoffrey Crayon, summoned from his literary reveries to see the gentleman intent upon securing his dividend.

We spent the whole day with Irving, and it would be impossible to imagine any thing more charming than the conversation. It was not "brilliant," or "striking," or any other commonplace adjective, but perfectly natural, original, and pleasant. The first impression produced by the individual was not promising. You would have said that a plain, rather dull farmer stood before you, with no ideas beyond the price of wheat, and no ambition greater than to raise the most gigantic pumpkins. But this theory of the man soon disappeared from the mind. It was evidently "a scholar, and a ripe one," who was walking beside you, with his pleasant voice, his sweet smile, his queer little figure, the very sight of which put you

in good humor. And this scholar, as you soon found, had not studied human nature in books only, but in men. From his chance allusions—and no man talked less for effect, or so little thought of “making an impression”—you discovered that he had not only seen many countries, but had known personally some of the most celebrated men of modern times. Scott, Leslie the painter, Louis Napoleon, the Empress Eugenie—some allusion brought up these personages; and Irving strolled on amid his flowers, talking of them with the simplest and quietest humor, and from time to time a touch of feeling for all the world like his books. His talk was an April day—drifting clouds and sunshine, but the sunshine predominant. His short, shy laugh was the perfection of quiet enjoyment; and there was a charm in the sad, memorial tones of his voice as he spoke of Scott and others, which can not easily be described. He laughed as he told of the painter, Leslie, I think, who went to Abbotsford to paint Scott’s portrait, and found the house full of company. The company having departed, Leslie thought, “Now for my picture”; but Scott, starting up from the breakfast-table, exclaimed, “Now for a hare!” the remainder of the day being spent in hunting, though at this time the printers were waiting for “copy” of one of his greatest novels. Irving’s account of Scott was delightful, and his anecdotes of Leslie, then just

dead, I believe, full of interest. They had travelled to Stratford together, he said, and he wanted Leslie to paint "Shakespeare before Sir Thomas Lucy"; but the great artist did not get the inspiration, and never made the picture.

Speaking of the present Emperor of the French, Irving said :

"Yes, he is a remarkable man. I knew him when he was in America, and he used to travel up from New York to look at West Point, which seemed to interest him very much. He dined with me, here, one day, and sat just where you do now (to me ; we were at dinner). He was grave and silent, scarcely opening his lips while here ; but a young French count who accompanied him was more agreeable, and a much greater favorite with the girls."

D—— spoke of the Empress Eugenie, and Irving said :

"I knew her very well in Spain, when she was little Eugenie de Montijo, daughter of the Count de Teba. She was a fine buxom girl, a beautiful figure ; and at the balls dressed as a mousquetaire—female. I have often had her on my knee, and now to think she is an Empress ! Old Calderon (de la Barca, Spanish minister) said to me at Washington when I was there : ' Good heavens, Irving ! just to think ! Little Eugenie Montijo, Empress of France—hum ! hum ! hum ! ' "

What was most delightful about this tranquil, smiling talk of the great writer, strolling over the summer sward, beneath his trees, was the genuine simplicity and naturalness of his tone and manner. It was the spontaneous overflow of the genial fountain of feeling and humor in the bosom of the man. If there had been something of the shy reserve of the student in his manner when we were regarded as "some of those people from New York," this had now completely disappeared, and Irving's bearing was exquisitely genial, and full of that ease which, for want of a better term, we call high-breeding. It was evident that he had mingled familiarly with the most cultivated men and women of Europe and America; and that he was in the best sense of the word a man of the world. He had, however, what no birth or breeding can supply—a kindliness, simplicity, and genial sweetness of manner, which were inexpressibly delightful. A good warm heart spoke in every word which he uttered, and it was this, even more than his humor, that chiefly impressed me. Here was evidently a thoroughly *good and true* man—one who scorned falsehood, hated meanness, loved his fellows, and had a kind and charitable word for all men. His humor attracted attention more than all his other traits; but this humor was only the lightning which flickered over the broad ocean of his humanity and love of his fellow-creatures. God had given to this

eminent personage a temper so sweet, a heart so loving and kind, that I for one forgot all about Irving the author, and saw before me only Irving the gentleman, the smiling, winning, warm-hearted friend and companion.

The smile which lit up his face when he waited for the gardener's children, who were decorating themselves with flowers "for a little fête," was charming; and the quaint humor with which he described the rueful face of the gardener, when his wife brought him twins, was as good as any thing in the Sketch-Book.

It was thus that I saw Irving where I most wished to see him—in the midst of those scenes with which his name is inseparably connected. Within sight of his house were Sleepy Hollow and the great Tappan Zee. New York might rush and roar below, and send its mighty heart-throbs, its splendid argosies throughout the world; but how much greater was the space filled in the eyes of thousands by that little mansion peering out from its flowers, on the banks of the Hudson! For me at least, this modest dwelling, and the man who inhabited it, possessed more attractions than all the glories of the Fifth Avenue. It was the house of an illustrious personage, famous in two hemispheres; but that was not its greatest charm. Geoffrey Crayon lived there—the originator of so much that had charmed me in my childhood and de-

lighted me in maturer years ; and I regarded myself as peculiarly fortunate in thus seeing the master before he died. That sight of him in the summer of 1858 was "for the first time and the last time" ; in the autumn he was gone. The interview was a brief one, but a whole year passed in his society could not have impressed upon me more vividly the peculiarities of his genius. Gentle, genial, simple, high-bred—his delightful courtesy, mingled with his quaint rich humor to render his society charming. Here was an old man with the fresh feelings of a child ; a heart unhardened by years. Many grievous misfortunes had tried his temper, but left it unsoured. He had been very poor, but never became misanthropical. Floating long upon the troubled surges, and buffeted by the waves of "narrow fortune," he had never become cynical or bitter, and presented in his old age, now, a spectacle which it was impossible not to regard with admiration, respect, and affection.

As the cordial smiling gentleman strolled through his little domain, I could not help thinking, as I looked at him, of the sweet and pathetic romance I had heard in connection with his youth. In his early manhood, he had loved and been engaged to a young lady of New York ; but his marriage was prevented by her death. He remained faithful, however, to her memory ; never married ; and when he died, the Bible which she had given him was

found upon the table by his bed, with his name on the fly-leaf in the delicate hand of the woman he had loved. Had he carried that Bible with him throughout those seventeen years of absence, through the long hours of travel in many lands? I think sometimes that he must have read it through tears, amid the ruins of the Alhambra, in the Apennines, or in the shady lanes of England, sending back his heart to her grave in his native land, or returning at sight of her handwriting to the days when they were happy.

It was the knowledge of this pathetic passage in his early life that made Irving still more interesting in my eyes. Under all that gay humor there was a secret sadness. This man had suffered like the meanest of his species, and, however illustrious his genius, could not recall from the tomb his first and last love. It was an evidence of the rare healthfulness of his character that this "rooted sorrow" had not made him gloomy or morose. It seemed to have had an effect directly opposite. It softened him; made him love children, flowers, and simple things; and gave to his pathos that affecting sweetness, unexcelled perhaps by any writer of the English tongue. Showing him the fallibility of all human things, it enabled him to look upon life with the eye of the philosopher and the Christian, and endowed him, in place of vanity, with a large and sweet humanity. When he went to Europe, it must

have been the gentle, kindly charm thus communicated to his manners which endeared the young American to the distinguished society in which he mingled ; and he never lost the tenderness of feeling which his early sorrow had occasioned. To the last day of his life, he shed tears easily. Any thing sweet or pathetic thus affected him—the song of a girl, as once at an evening-party in Virginia ; the voices of children ; or the services of the church of which he was a member. He told a lady of my acquaintance that the latter frequently moved him to tears. Was it remarkable that an unknown stranger, admiring him always as one of the greatest of humorists, should have loved him too after looking upon the kindly face over which so many tears had chased each other ?

Such was Irving at Sunnyside in 1858. It was the Nestor of literature whom I talked with, famous in the Old World and the New. He had outlived the generation which witnessed his early struggles, and those who thus looked to him as the head of our literature were a sort of posterity. Their fathers had laughed and cried over his pages ; and they never dreamed of criticising or discussing his merits. Strange fortune of a living man ! immense triumph of authorcraft ! to hear another generation, unseen, unknown, hail you as a classic ! to feel that your fame is established, your statue erected, your name engraved upon the front of the Pantheon !

Such a conviction must have been felt by Washington Irving, for the whole world had acknowledged his genius, and placed upon record their earnest admiration and affection.

He was not to enjoy this great and deeply gratifying fame much longer, when I saw him. Those summer days were his last. In November, I think, he died. But his kindly spirit burned clear and bright to the last. A letter which I received from him at this time, when sickness and old age had nearly paralyzed the busy hand, was full of genial good-feeling. His friendly voice seemed to sound in the cordial words, and his smile to light up the page. There was a slight tremor in the letters, and you would have said that a mist had passed at times before the eyes of the writer, rendering his vision indistinct; but the heart was all right, the sentiment kind and warm, if the hand was cold and infirm.

Curiosity to see and talk with distinguished people is a rather poor sentiment, though no doubt quite harmless; but I am not sorry to have seen Irving at Sunnyside in 1858. An illustrious man, at the end of a great career, who has borne poverty and sorrow, as well as wealth and fame, with equanimity, and awaits the hand of death with humble faith and submission, is surely a wholesome spectacle.

Such a man was Washington Irving.

A VISIT TO WASHINGTON IRVING.

I had half an hour one day last week at Sunnyside—the residence of Washington Irving. Such a half-hour ought to have been one of the pleasantest in one's life ; and so it was ! The pleasure began before reaching the door-step, or taking the old man's hand—in the thousand associations of the place—for a visit to Sunnyside is equal to a pilgrimage to Abbotsford.

The quaint, grotesque old dwelling, with its old-fashioned gables, stood as solemn and sleepy among the trees as if it had been built to personate old Rip Van Winkle at his nap. The grounds were covered with brown and yellow leaves, with here and there a red squirrel running and rustling among them, as if pretending to be the true red-breast that laid the leaves over the babes in the wood.

The morning had been rainy, and the afternoon showed only a few momentary openings of clear sky ; so that I saw Sunnyside without the sun. But under the heavy clouds there was something awe-inspiring in the sombre view of those grand hills with their many-colored forests, and of Hendrick Hudson's ancient river still flowing at the feet of the ancient palisades.

The mansion of Sunnyside has been standing for twenty-three years ; but when first its sharp-angled roof wedged its way up among the branches of the old woods, the region was far more a solitude than

now ; for at that time our busy author had secluded himself from almost everybody but one near neighbor ; while he has since unwittingly gathered around him a little community of New-York merchants, whose elegant country-seats, opening into each other by mutual intertwining roads, form what looks like one vast and free estate, called on the time-tables of the railroad by the honorary name of Irvington. But even within the growing circle of his many neighbors, the genial old Knickerbocker still lives in true retirement, entertaining his guests within echo distance of Sleepy Hollow—without thought, and almost without knowledge,—

“—how the great world
Is praising him far off.”

He withdrew a year ago from all literary labor, and is now spending the close of his life in well-earned and long-needed repose.

Mr. Irving is not so old-looking as one would expect who knew his age. I fancied him as in the winter of life ; I found him only in its Indian summer. He came down stairs, and walked through the hall into the back parlor, with a firm and lively step that might well have made one doubt whether he had truly attained his seventy-seventh year. He was suffering from asthma, and was muffled against the damp air with a Scotch shawl, wrapped like a great loose scarf around his neck ; but as he took his

seat in the old arm-chair, and, despite his hoarseness and troubled chest, began an unexpectedly vivacious conversation, he made me almost forget that I was the guest of an old man long past his "three-score years and ten."

But what should one talk about who had only half an hour with Washington Irving? I ventured the question :

"Now that you have laid aside your pen, which of your books do you look back upon with most pleasure?"

He immediately replied : "I scarcely look with full satisfaction upon any ; for they do not seem what they might have been ; I often wish that I could have twenty years more, to take them down from the shelf, one by one, and write them over."

He spoke of his daily habits of writing, before he had made the resolution to write no more. His usual hours for literary work were from morning till noon. But, although he had generally found his mind most vigorous in the early part of the day, he had always been subject to moods and caprices, and could never tell, when he took up the pen, how many hours would pass before he would lay it down.

"But," said he, "these capricious periods, of the heat and glow of composition, have been the happiest hours of my life. I have never found, in any thing outside of the four walls of my study, any

enjoyment equal to sitting at my writing-desk with a clean page, a new theme, and a mind awake."

His literary employments, he remarked, had always been more like entertainments than tasks.

"Some writers," said he, "appear to have been independent of moods. Sir Walter Scott, for instance, had great power of writing, and could work almost at any time ; so could Crabbe—but with this difference : Scott always, and Crabbe seldom, wrote well. I remember," said he, "taking breakfast one morning with Rogers, Moore, and Crabbe ; the conversation turned on Lord Byron's poetic moods ; Crabbe said that, however it might be with Lord Byron, as for himself he could write as well one time as at another. But," said Irving, with a twinkle of humor at recalling the incident : "Crabbe has written a great deal that nobody can read."

He mentioned that while living in Paris he went a long period without being able to write. "I sat down repeatedly," said he, "with pen and ink, but could invent nothing worth putting on the paper. At length I told my friend Tom Moore, who dropped in one morning, that now, after long waiting, I had the mood, and would hold it, and work it out as long as it would last, until I had wrung my brain dry. So I began to write shortly after breakfast, and continued, without noticing how the time was passing, until Moore came in again at four in the afternoon—when I had completely covered the

table with freshly written sheets. I kept the mood almost without interruption for six weeks."

I asked which of his books was the result of this frenzy; he replied: "Bracebridge Hall."

"None of your books," I remarked, "are more charming than the biography of Goldsmith."

"Yet that was written," said he, "even more rapidly than the other." He then added:

"When I have been engaged on a continuous work, I have often been obliged to rise in the middle of the night, light my lamp, and write an hour or two, to relieve my mind; and now that I write no more, I am sometimes compelled to get up in the same way to read."

Sometimes, also, as the last Idlewild letters mention, he gets up to shave.

"When I was in Spain," he remarked, "searching the old chronicles, and engaged on the 'Life of Columbus,' I often wrote fourteen or fifteen hours out of the twenty-four."

He said that whenever he had forced his mind unwillingly to work the product was worthless, and he invariably threw it away and began again; "for," as he observed, "an essay or chapter that has been only hammered out is seldom good for any thing. An author's right time to work is when his mind is aglow—when his imagination is kindled; these are his precious moments; let him wait until they come, but when they have come let him make the most of them."

I referred to his last and greatest work, the "Life of Washington," and asked if he felt, on finishing it, any such sensation as Gibbon is said to have experienced over the last sheet of the "Decline and Fall." He replied that the whole work had engrossed his mind to such a degree that, before he was aware, he had written himself into feebleness of health; that he feared in the midst of his labor that it would break him down before he could end it; that when at last the final pages were written, he gave the manuscript to his nephew to be conducted through the press, and threw himself back upon his red-cushioned lounge with an indescribable feeling of relief! He added that the great fatigue of mind throughout the whole task had resulted from the care and pains required in the construction and arrangement of materials, and not in the mere literary composition of the successive chapters.

But what magnificent volumes! What a work for an old man to have achieved! What a fitting close to the labors of a long and busy life! They unite on one page, and will perpetuate in one memory, not only a great name, but its great namesake: the Father of the American Republic, and the Father of the American Republic of Letters.

On the parlor wall hung the engraving of Faed's picture of "Scott and his Contemporaries." I alluded to it as presenting a group of his former friends.

"Yes," said he, "I knew every man of them but three; and now they are all gone."

"Are the portraits good?" I inquired.

"Scott's head," he replied, "is well drawn, though the expression lacks something of Scott's force; Campbell's is tolerable; Lockhart's is the worst. Lockhart," said he, "was a man of very delicate organization, but he had a more manly look than in the picture."

"You should write one more book," I hinted.

"What is that?"

"Your reminiscences of those literary friends."

"Ah," he exclaimed, "it is too late now! I shall never take the pen again; I have so entirely given up writing, that even my best friends' letters lie unanswered. I must have rest. No more books now!"

He referred to the visit, a week before, from Mr. Willis, whose letter he had just been reading in the *Home Journal*.

"I am most glad," said he, "that Mr. Willis remembered my nieces; they are my housekeepers and nurses; they take such good care of me that really I am the most fortunate old bachelor in the world! Yes," he repeated with a merry emphasis, "the most fortunate old bachelor in all the world!"

It was delightful to witness the animation of his manner, and the heartiness of his gratitude, as he continued to relate how they supplied all his wants

—gave him his medicines at the right time, without troubling him to look at the clock for himself—called him down to breakfast—cloaked and shawled him for his morning ride—brought him his hat for his fine-weather walks—and in every possible way humored him in every possible whim.

“I call them sometimes my nieces,” he said, “but oftener my daughters!”

As I rose to go, he brought from the corner of the room a photograph of a little girl, exhibiting it with great enthusiasm. It was a gift from a little child who had come to see him every day during his sickness. The picture was accompanied with a note, printed in large letters, with a lead pencil, by the little correspondent, who said she was too young to write! He spoke with great vivacity of his childish visitor. “Children,” said the old man, “are great pets: I am very fond of the little creatures.”

The author’s study—into which I looked for a few moments before leaving—is a small room, almost entirely filled by the great writing-table and the lounge behind it. The walls are laden with books and pictures, which evidently are re-arranged every day by some delicate hand; for none of the books were tumbled into a corner, and no papers were lying loose upon the table. The pen, too, was laid precisely parallel to the edge of the inkstand—a nicety which only a womanly housekeeper would

persevere to maintain ! Besides, there was not a speck of dust upon carpet or cushion !

I stood reverently in the little room—as if it were a sacred place ! Its associations filled my mind with as much delight as if I had been breathing fragrance from hidden flowers. On leaving, I carried the picture of it vividly in my mind, and still carry it ;—the quiet, secluded, poetic haunt in which a great author wrote his greatest works !

As I came away, the old gentleman bundled his shawl about him, and stood a few moments on the steps. A momentary burst of sunshine fell on him through the breaking clouds. In that full light he looked still less like an old man than in the dark parlor by the shaded window. His form was slightly bent, but the quiet humor of the early portraits was still lingering in his face. He was the same genial, generous, merry-eyed man at seventy-seven as Jarvis had painted him nearly fifty years before. I wish always to remember him as I saw him at that last moment !

CHAPTER VII.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

"Poe at West Point," by a fellow-cadet—"Reminiscences of the Last Days of Poe," by Susan Archer Weiss.

THE first of the following sketches, by Mr. T. W. Gibson, a school-fellow of Poe's, is reproduced from *Harper's Magazine*. The second, by Mrs. Susan A. T. Weiss, originally appeared in *Scribner's Monthly*.

POE AT WEST POINT.

Number 28 South Barracks, in the last months of the year of our Lord 1830, was pretty generally regarded as a hard room. Cadets who aspired to high standing on the merit roll were not much given to visiting it, atleast in daytime. To compensate in some measure for this neglect, however, the inspecting-officer was uncommonly punctual in his visits, and rarely failed to find some subject for his daily report of demerit. The old barracks have passed away, and are now only a dream of stone and mortar ; but the records of the sins of omission and commission of Number 28 and its occupants

remain, and are filed carefully away among the dusty archives of the Academy.

Edgar A. Poe was one of the occupants of the room. "Old P——" and the writer of this sketch completed the household. The first conversation I had with Poe after we became installed as room-mates was characteristic of the man. A volume of Campbell's poems was lying upon my table, and he tossed it contemptuously aside, with the curt remark: "Campbell is a plagiarist"; then without waiting for a reply he picked up the book, and turned the leaves over rapidly until he found the passage he was looking for.

"There," said he, "is a line more often quoted than any other passage of his: 'Like angel visits few and far between,' and he stole it bodily from Blair's 'Grave.' Not satisfied with the theft, he has spoiled it in the effort to disguise it. Blair wrote 'Like angel visits *short* and far between.' Campbell's 'few and far between' is mere tautology."

Poe at that time, though only about twenty years of age, had the appearance of being much older. He had a worn, weary, discontented look, not easily forgotten by those who were intimate with him. Poe was easily fretted by any jest at his expense, and was not a little annoyed by a story that some of the class got up, to the effect that he had procured a cadet's appointment for his son, and the

boy having died, the father had substituted himself in his place. Another report current in the corps was that he was a grandson of Benedict Arnold. Some good-natured friend told him of it, and Poe did not contradict it, but seemed rather pleased than otherwise at the mistake.

Very early in his brief career at the Point he established a high reputation for genius, and poems and squibs of local interest were daily issued from Number 28 and went the round of the classes. One of the first things of the kind that he perpetrated was a diatribe in which all of the officers of the Academy, from Colonel Thayer down, were duly if not favorably noticed. I can recall but one stanza. It ran thus .

“ John Locke was a very great name ;
Joe Locke was a greater in short ;
The former was well known to Fame,
The latter well known to Report.”

Joe Locke, it may be remarked by way of explanation, was one of the instructors of tactics, and *ex-officio* Inspector of Barracks, and supervisor of the morals and deportment of cadets generally. In this capacity it was his duty to report to headquarters every violation of the regulations falling under his observation ; a duty in which he was in no wise remiss, as the occupants of Number 28 could severally testify.

The studies of the Academy Poe utterly ignored.

I doubt if he ever studied a page of Lacroix, unless it was to glance hastily over it in the lecture-room, while others of his section were reciting. It was evident from the first that he had no intention of going through with the course, and both the professors and cadets of the older classes had set him down for a "January Colt," before the corps had been in barracks a week.

Poe disappointed them, however, for he did not remain until the January examination, that *pons asinorum* of *plebe* life at West Point. He resigned, I think, early in December, having been a member of the corps a little over five months.

Some month or two after he had left, it was announced that a volume of his poems would be published by subscription, at the price of two dollars and fifty cents per copy. Permission was granted by Colonel Thayer to the corps to subscribe for the book, and, as no cadet was ever known to neglect any opportunity of spending his pay, the subscription was pretty near universal. The book was received with a general expression of disgust. It was a puny volume, of about fifty pages, bound in boards and badly printed on coarse paper, and, worse than all, it contained not one of the squibs and satires upon which his reputation at the Academy had been built up. Few of the poems contained in that collection now appear in any of the editions of his works, and such as have been

preserved have been very much altered for the better.

For months afterward quotations from Poe formed the standing material for jests in the corps, and his reputation for genius went down at once to zero. I doubt if even the "Raven" of his after-years ever entirely effaced from the minds of his class the impression received from that volume.

The unfortunate habit that proved the bane of his after-life had even at that time taken strong hold upon him, and Number 28 was seldom without a bottle of Benny Haven's best brandy. I don't think he was ever intoxicated while at the Academy, but he had already acquired the more dangerous habit of constant drinking.

Keeping up the communications with our base of supplies at "Old Benny's" was one of the problems that occupied a good deal more of our thoughts than any of the propositions in Legendre; but, upon the whole, this branch of the commissary department of Number 28 was a success; and many a thirsty soul, with not enough of pluck to run the blockade himself, would steal into our room between tattoo and taps to try the merits of the last importation.

The result of one of these foraging parties after supplies created for a time no little excitement in the South Barracks. People had been burned and hung in effigy, from time immemorial, but it was reserved for Number 28 to witness the eating of a professor in effigy.

It was a dark, cold, drizzling night, in the last days of November, when this event came off. The brandy-bottle had been empty for two days, and just at dusk Poe proposed that we should draw straws—the one who drew the shortest to go down to Old Benny's and replenish our stock. The straws were drawn, and the lot fell on me.

Provided with four pounds of candles and Poe's last blanket, for traffic (silver and gold we had not, but such as we had we gave unto Benny), I started just as the bugle sounded to quarters. It was a rough road to travel, but I knew every foot of it by night or day, and reached my place of destination in safety, but drenched to the skin. Old Benny was not in the best of humors that evening. Candles and blankets and regulation shoes, and similar articles of traffic, had accumulated largely on his hands, and the market for them was dull in that neighborhood. His chicken-suppers and bottles of brandy had disappeared very rapidly of late, and he had received little or no money in return.

At last, however, I succeeded in exchanging the candles and blanket for a bottle of brandy and the hardest-featured, loudest-voiced old gander that it has ever been my lot to encounter. To chop the bird's head off before venturing into barracks with him was a matter of pure necessity; and thus, in fact, old Benny rendered him before delivery. I reached

the suburbs of the barracks about nine o'clock. The bottle had not as much brandy in it as when I left old Benny's ; but I was very confident I had not spilled any. I had carried the gander first over one shoulder and then over the other, and the consequence was that not only my shirt-front but my face and hands were as bloody as the entire contents of the old gander's veins and arteries could well make them.

Poe was on the look-out, and met me some distance from the barracks, and my appearance at once inspired him with the idea of a grand hoax. Our plans were perfected in an instant. The gander was tied, neck and feet and wings together, and the bloody feathers bristling in every direction gave it a nondescript appearance that would have defied recognition as a gander by the most astute naturalist on the continent. Poe took charge of the bottle, and preceded me to the room. "Old P." was puzzling his brains over the binomial theorem, and a visitor from the North Barracks was in the room awaiting the result of my expedition.

Poe had taken his seat, and pretended to be absorbed in the mysteries of "*Leçons Françaises.*"

Laying the gander down at the outside of the door, I walked or rather staggered into the room, pretending to be very drunk, and exhibiting in clothes and face a spectacle not often seen off the stage.

“My God! what has happened?” exclaimed Poe with well-acted horror.

“Old K——, Old K——!” I repeated several times, and with gestures intended to be particularly savage.

“Well, what of him?” asked Poe.

“He won’t stop me on the road any more!” and I produced a large knife that we had stained with the few drops of blood that remained in the old gander. “I have killed him!”

“Nonsense!” said Poe. “You are only trying one of your tricks on us.”

“I did n’t suppose you would believe me,” I replied; “so I cut off his head and brought it into barracks. Here it is!” And reaching out of the door I caught the gander by the legs, and giving it one fearful swing around my head, dashed it at the only candle in the room, and left them all in darkness with what two of them believed to be the head of one of the professors. The visitor leaped through the window and alighted in the slop-tub, and made fast time for his own room in the North Barracks—spreading, as he went, the report that I had killed old K——, and that his head was then in Number 28. The story gained ready credence, and for a time the excitement in barracks ran high. When we lit the candle again “Old P——” was sitting in one corner a blank picture of horror, and it was some time before we could restore him to reason.

The gander was skinned—picking the feathers off was out of the question—and after taps we cut him up in small pieces and cooked him in a tin wash-basin, over an anthracite fire, without seasoning of any kind. It was perhaps the hardest supper on record, but we went through it without flinching. We had set out to eat Old K—— in effigy, and we did it ; whether he ever learned of the honors we paid him that night I never learned.

Upon the whole the impression left by Poe in his short career at West Point was highly favorable to him. If he made no fast friends, he left no enemies behind him. But up to that time he had given no indications of the genius which has since secured for him a world-wide fame. His acquaintance with English literature was extensive and accurate, and his verbal memory wonderful. He would repeat both prose and poetry by the hour, and seldom or never repeated the same passage twice to the same audience.

The whole bent of his mind at that time seemed to be toward criticism—or, more properly speaking, cavilling. Whether it was Shakespeare or Byron, Addison or Johnson—the acknowledged classic or the latest poetaster—all came in alike for his critical censure. He seemed to take especial delight in cavilling at passages that had received the most unequivocal stamp of general approval. I never heard him speak in terms of praise of any English

writer, living or dead. I never met him after he left the Academy in December, 1830 ; and hence my recollections and impressions of him are wholly uninfluenced by his after-life.

LAST DAYS OF EDGAR A. POE.

When I was about seven years of age, it was my habit to peruse eagerly every scrap of literature that fell in my way. In this manner I had read "The Children of the Abbey," "Pike's Expeditions," "Buck's Theology," "Castle of Otranto," and the "Spectator," with other prose works of equally dissimilar character, but as yet the world of poetry was an unknown world to me.

One day I came across an old number of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, containing the well-known ballad beginning :

"Lo, the ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow."

Whatever may be my present opinion of this poem, no words can describe the charm which it exercised over my childish fancy. The music of it was a keen delight ; the mystery of it, which I could in no wise fathom, was a subtle fascination ; and its sadness, a pain which "touched my soul with pity" : for that it was an authentic history, an actual experience of Edgar A. Poe, it never occurred to me to doubt.

Who was Edgar A. Poe? My idea of him was then, and for years after, as other productions of his pen met my eye, that of a mysterious being in human shape, yet gifted with a power more than human; a something of weird beauty and despairing sadness, touched with a vague suspicion of evil which inspired in me a sense of dread, mingled with compassion. To this feeling was added in time one akin to horror, upon my reading the sketch of the "Pest" family, every word of which I received as truth; and the picture of the awful Pests seated in their coffins around the festal board, and of their subsequent wild flight with their winding-sheets streaming behind them, long haunted me with an unspeakable horror.

Who was Edgar A. Poe? I at length inquired of my mother. With wondering interest I learned that he was a gentleman of Richmond, and that he had resided in the very house which I had visited the day before. Thenceforth this house with its massive portico, in which Edgar Poe had played when a child, and the trees on the lawn which he had climbed, were to me objects of solemn and mysterious interest.

This house was that of Mr. Allan, who had adopted Poe when a child. It is still to be seen at the corner of Main and Fifth streets, unchanged, with the exception of a modern addition. Opposite, in old times, stood the large frame mansion,

surrounded by piazzas, of Mrs. Jane Mackenzie, who adopted Poe's sister, Rosalie. On the right of Mr. Allan's there yet stands a tall brick house (now occupied by the Rev. Moses Hoge), which was at the time of which I speak the residence of Major James Gibbon. These three families occupied a first social position, and were on terms of mutual intimacy, and from them and others I have heard many anecdotes of Edgar Poe's youth and childhood. Passing over these for the present, I will proceed to speak of the time when I myself became acquainted with him.

In 1849 I was residing at our suburban home near Richmond, Virginia, in the immediate neighborhood of Duncan's Lodge, then the residence of Mrs. Mackenzie. Being intimate with the family (of which Mr. Poe's sister was a member), we had been for years accustomed to hear him constantly and familiarly spoken of. Mrs. Mackenzie had always been fond of him, and he, like his sister, was accustomed to call her "Ma," and to confide in her as in a mother.

I remember Miss Poe describing to us her visits to her brother at Fordham, then informing us of the death of his wife, and, afterward, mentioning a vague rumor of his engagement to Mrs. Whitman, and finally announcing with great delight that Edgar was coming on a visit to his friends in Richmond.

It was in July that he arrived. He first took a room at the American Hotel, but soon changed his

quarters to the Old Swan Tavern—a long, low, antiquated building which had been in its day the fashionable hotel of Richmond. Poe remarked that he had a quadruple motive in choosing it—it was cheap, well kept in “the old Virginia style,” associated with many pleasant memories of his youth, and, lastly and chiefly, nearest Duncan’s Lodge, where most of his time was passed.

It was a day or two after his arrival that Poe, accompanied by his sister, called on us. He had, some time previous, in a critique on Griswold’s “American Female Poets,” taken flattering notice of my early poems, which had recently appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger*; and now, on learning from Mrs. Mackenzie that I resided in the neighborhood, he had desired an introduction. The remembrance of that first meeting with the poet is still as vividly impressed upon my mind as though it had been but yesterday. A shy and dreamy girl, scarcely more than a child, I had all my life taken an interest in those strange stories and poems of Edgar Poe; and now, with my old childish impression of their author scarcely worn off, I regarded the meeting with an eager, yet shrinking, anticipation. As I entered the parlor, Poe was seated near an open window, quietly conversing. His attitude was easy and graceful, with one arm lightly resting upon the back of his chair. His dark curling hair was thrown back from his broad

forehead—a style in which he habitually wore it. At sight of him, the impression produced upon me was of a refined, high-bred, and chivalrous gentleman. I use this word “chivalrous” as exactly descriptive of something in his whole *personnel*, distinct from either polish or high-breeding, and which, though instantly apparent, was yet an effect too subtle to be described. He rose on my entrance, and, other visitors being present, stood with one hand resting on the back of his chair, awaiting my greeting. So dignified was his manner, so reserved his expression, that I experienced an involuntary recoil, until I turned to him and saw his eyes suddenly brighten as I offered my hand; a barrier seemed to melt between us, and I felt that we were no longer strangers.

I am thus minute in my account of my first meeting with Poe, because I would illustrate, if possible, the manner peculiar to him, and also the indescribable charm, I might almost say magnetism, which his eyes possessed above any others that I have ever seen. It was this mysterious influence, I am inclined to think, which often, so powerfully at first sight, attracted strangers to him (*vide* Mr. Kennedy's account); and this it was, undoubtedly, which Mrs. Osgood on her first interview with him experienced, but scarcely understood.

From this time I saw Poe constantly,—especially during the last weeks of his stay in Richmond.

From his sister also, and from intimate common friends, we knew all concerning him,—so that about this portion of his life there is no reserve and no mystery.

It would be better, indeed, for his fair name, could a veil be drawn over certain dark spots which disfigure this otherwise unusually pure and happy phase of his life. On these, I prefer to touch as lightly as possible. I know that he strove against the evil ; but his will was weak : and having once yielded, in however slight a degree, said his friends, he seemed to lose all control over himself ; and twice during his visit to Richmond his life was thus seriously endangered. Yet, though I heard something of these things, I did not then, nor until long after, fully understand them. It was his own request that I should not be informed of his weakness ; and he was scrupulously careful never to appear in our presence except when he was, as he expressed it, “ entirely himself.”

And as himself,—that is, as he appeared to me in my own home and in society,—Poe was pre-eminently a gentleman. This was apparent in every thing about him, even to the least detail. He dressed always in black, and with faultless taste and simplicity. An indescribable refinement pervaded all that he did and said. His general bearing in society, especially toward strangers, was quiet, dignified, and somewhat reserved, even at times uncon-

sciously approaching *hauteur*. He rarely smiled, and never laughed. When pleased, nothing could exceed the charm of his manner,—to his own sex, cordial ; to ladies, marked by a sort of chivalrous, respectful courtesy.

I was surprised to find that the poet was not the melancholy person I had unconsciously pictured. On the contrary, he appeared, except on one occasion, invariably cheerful and frequently playful in mood. He seemed quietly amused by the light-hearted chat of the young people about him, and often joined them in humorous repartee, sometimes tinged with a playful sarcasm. Yet he preferred to sit quietly, and listen and observe. Nothing escaped his keen observation. He was extremely fastidious in his idea of feminine requirements, and himself lamented that at slight things in women he was apt to be repelled and disgusted, even against his better judgment. Though in the social evenings with us or at Duncan's Lodge Poe would join in the light conversation or amusement of the hour, I observed that it had not power to interest him for any length of time. He preferred a seat on the portico, or a stroll about the lawn or garden, in company with a friend.

In his conversations with me Poe expressed himself with a freedom and unreserve which gave me a clearer insight into his personal history and character than, I think, was possessed by many persons.

Indeed, I may say that from the moment of our meeting he was never to me the "inexplicable" character that he was pronounced by others. Young as I was, I had yet by some intuitive instinct of perception, as it were, comprehended the finer and more elevated nature of the man, and it was probably to his own consciousness of this that I owed his confidence. I remember his saying, near the beginning of our acquaintance, and in reply to a remark of my own, "I cannot express the pleasure—the more than pleasure—of finding myself so entirely understood by you"; adding: "It is not often that I am so understood." Again, he said of Mrs. Osgood: "She is the only one of my friends who *understands* me." His own insight into personal character was quick and intuitive, but not deep; and it struck me even then, with all my youthful inexperience, that in knowledge of human nature he was, for a man of his genius, strangely deficient.

Among other things, Poe spoke to me freely of his future plans and prospects. He was at this time absorbed in his cherished scheme of establishing his projected journal, *The Stylus*. Nearly all his old friends in Virginia had promised to aid him with the necessary funds, and he was sanguine of success. He intended to spare no pains, no effort, to establish this as the leading literary journal of the country. The plan of it, which he explained

in detail, but of which I retain little recollection, was to be something entirely original; and the highest "genius, distinctive from talent," of the country was to be represented in its pages. To secure this result, he would offer a more liberal price for contributions than any other publisher. This would, of course, demand capital to begin with, which was all that he required; and of that he had the promise. To establish this journal had been, he said, the cherished dream of his life, and now at last he felt assured of success. And in thus speaking he held his head erect, and his eyes glowed with enthusiasm. "I must and will succeed!" he said.

Much curiosity has been expressed and many and various statements have been made in regard to the poet's relations at this time with Mrs. Sarah Shelton of Richmond. So far as I am certainly informed upon the subject, the story is simply this:

The two had been school-mates, and, as such, a childish flirtation had existed between them. When, some years previous to this time, Poe made a brief visit to Richmond, Mrs. Shelton, then a wealthy widow, had invited him to her house and treated him with special attention. Shortly after the death of his wife, an intimate friend wrote to him that Mrs. Shelton often inquired after him, and suggested the plan which he somewhat later,

when so much in need of money, came seriously to consider. Certain it is that a correspondence existed between the poet and Mrs. Shelton almost from the time of Mrs. Poe's death, and that for months before his appearance in Richmond it was understood by his friends that an engagement of marriage existed between them. His attentions to the lady immediately upon his arrival tended to confirm the report. Some friend of hers, however, represented to her that Poe's motives were of a mercenary nature ; and of this she accused him, at the same time declaring her intention of so securing her property as to prevent his having any command of it. A rupture ensued, and thenceforth no further communication took place between them.

Poe never publicly admitted his engagement with Mrs. Shelton, and appeared anxious to keep the matter private. Mr. John M. Daniel, the well-known editor of *The Examiner*, having in the columns of that paper made some allusion to the reported engagement, Poe resented it as an unwarrantable liberty, and proceeded to *The Examiner* office to demand an "explanation." Mr. Daniel, whose fiery temper was well known to Poe, had been informed of the proposed visit, and on the latter's entrance advanced to meet him. The two, who had never before met, stood facing each other ; but before a dozen words had been spoken, Mr. Daniel, as with a sudden impulse, extended his

hand, and Poe, who was quick to respond to any token of good feeling, and doubtless recognized the nobility of the man before him, as readily accepted it, and thus was ratified a friendship which lasted while they lived.

It will be seen from the above account of the affair with Mrs. Shelton that Poe did not, as is stated by his biographers, leave Richmond for New York with the intention of preparing for his marriage with that lady. Yet that he had entered into an engagement of marriage with her even previous to his appearance in Richmond, I am assured. It was at a time when, as he himself declared, he stood more in need of money than at any previous period of his life. It was, to his own view, the turning-point of his fortunes, depending upon his cherished scheme of establishing *The Stylus*, through which he was to secure fame and fortune. This could not be done without money. Money was the one thing needful, upon which all else depended ; and money he must have, at whatever cost or sacrifice. Hence the affair with Mrs. Shelton. She was a lady of respectability, but of plain manners and practical disposition ; older than Poe, and not gifted with those traits which might be supposed capable of attracting one of his peculiar taste and temperament.

While upon this subject, I venture, though with great hesitation, to say a word in relation to Poe's

own marriage with his cousin, Virginia Clemm. I am aware that there exists with the public but one view of this union, and that so lovely and touching in itself, that to mar the picture with even a shadow inspires almost a feeling of remorse. Yet since in the biography of a distinguished man of genius truth is above all things desirable, and since in this instance the facts do not redound to the discredit of any party concerned, I may be allowed to state what I have been assured is truth.

Poets are proverbial for uncongenial marriages, and to this Poe can scarcely be classed as an exception. From the time when as a youth of nineteen he became a tutor to his sweet and gentle little cousin of six years old, he loved her with the tender and protective fondness of an elder brother. As years passed he became the subject of successive fancies or passions for various charming women ; but she, gradually budding into early womanhood, experienced but one attachment—an absorbing devotion to her handsome, talented, and fascinating cousin. So intense was this passion that her health and spirits became seriously affected, and her mother, aroused to painful solicitude, spoke to Edgar about it. This was just as he was preparing to leave her house, which had been for some years his home, and enter the world of business. The idea of this separation was insupportable to Virginia. The result was that Poe, at that time a young man of

twenty-eight, married his little, penniless, and delicate child-cousin of fourteen or fifteen, and thus unselfishly secured her own and her mother's happiness. In his wife he had ever the most tender and devoted of companions; but it was his own declaration that he ever missed in her a certain intellectual and spiritual sympathy necessary to perfect happiness in such a union. It was this need which so often impelled him to "those many romantic little episodes" of which Mrs. Osgood speaks, and which were well known to Poe's acquaintance. He was never a deliberately unkind husband, and toward the close of Mrs. Poe's life he was assiduous in his tender care and attention. Yet his own declaration to an intimate friend of his youth was that his marriage "had not been a congenial one"; and I repeatedly heard the match ascribed to Mrs. Clemm, by those who were well acquainted with the family and the circumstances. In thus alluding to a subject so delicate, I have not lightly done so, or unadvisedly made a statement which seems refuted by the testimony of so many who have written of "the passionate idolatry" with which the poet regarded his wife. I have heard the subject often and freely discussed by Poe's most intimate friends, including his sisters, and upon this authority I speak. Lovely in person, sweet and gentle in disposition, his young wife deserved, doubtless, all the love that it was in his

nature to bestow. Of his unvarying filial affection for Mrs. Clemm, and of her almost angelic devotion to himself and his interests, there can be no question.

Mr. Poe, among other plans for raising the funds so sorely needed, decided to give a series of lectures in Richmond. The first of these ("The Poetic Principle") brought him at once into prominent notice with the Richmond public. The press discussed him, and the élite of society fêted him. With the attention and kindness thus shown him he was much gratified. Yet he did not appear to care for the formal parties, and declared that he found more enjoyment with his friends in the country.

I can vividly recall him as he appeared on his visits to us. He always carried a cane, and upon entering the shade of the avenue would remove his hat, throw back his hair, and walk lingeringly, as if enjoying the coolness, carrying his hat in his hand, generally behind him. Sometimes he would pause to examine some rare flower, or to pluck a grape from the laden trellises. He met us always with an expression of pleasure illuminating his countenance and lighting his fine eyes.

Poe's eyes, indeed, were his most striking feature, and it was to these that his face owed its peculiar attraction. I have never seen other eyes at all resembling them. They were large, with long jet-black lashes,—the iris dark steel-

gray, possessing a crystalline clearness and transparency, through which the jet-black pupil was seen to expand and contract with every shade of thought or emotion. I observed that the lids never contracted, as is so usual in most persons, especially when talking; but his gaze was ever full, open, and unshrinking. His usual expression was dreamy and sad. He had a way of sometimes turning a slightly askance look upon some person who was not observing him, and, with a quiet, steady gaze, appear to be mentally taking the calibre of the unsuspecting subject. "What *awful* eyes Mr. Poe has!" said a lady to me. "It makes my blood run cold to see him slowly turn and fix them upon me when I am talking."

Apart from the wonderful beauty of his eyes, I would not have called Poe a very handsome man. He was, in my opinion, rather distinguished-looking than handsome. What he had been when younger I had heard, but at the period of my acquaintance with him he had a pallid and care-worn look,—somewhat haggard, indeed,—very apparent except in his moments of animation. He wore a dark moustache, scrupulously kept, but not entirely concealing a slightly contracted expression of the mouth and an occasional twitching of the upper lip, resembling a sneer. This sneer, indeed, was easily excited—a motion of the lip, scarcely perceptible, and yet intensely expressive. There was in it

nothing of ill-nature, but much of sarcasm, as when he remarked of a certain pretentious editor, "He can make bold plunges in shallow water"; and again, in reference to an editor presenting a costly book to a lady whose poems he had for years published while yet refusing to pay for them, Poe observed, "He could afford it," with that almost imperceptible curl of the lip, more expressive of contempt than words could have been. The shape of his head struck me, even on first sight, as peculiar. There was a massive projection of the broad brow and temples, with the organ of causality very conspicuously developed, a marked flatness of the top of the head, and an unusual fulness at the back. I had at this time no knowledge of phrenology; but now, in recalling this peculiar shape, I cannot deny that in Poe what are called the intellectual and animal portions of the head were remarkably developed, while in the moral regions there was marked a deficiency. Especially there was a slight depression instead of fulness of outline where the organs of veneration and firmness are located by phrenologists. This peculiarity detracted so much from the symmetrical proportions of the head that he sought to remedy the defect by wearing his hair tossed back, thus producing more apparent height of the cranium.

I am convinced that this time of which I speak must have been what Poe himself declared it—one

of the brightest, happiest, and most promising of his maturer life. Had he but possessed a will sufficiently strong to preserve him from the temptation which was his greatest bane, how fair and happy might have been his future career !

As I have said, the knowledge of this weakness was by his own request concealed from me. All that I knew of the matter was when a friend informed me that " Mr. Poe was too unwell to see us that evening." A day or two after this he sent a message by his sister requesting some flowers, in return for which came a dainty note of thanks, written in a tremulous hand. He again wrote, inclosing a little anonymous poem which he had found in some newspaper and admired ; and on the day following he made his appearance among us, but so pale, tremulous, and apparently subdued as to convince me that he had been seriously ill. On this occasion he had been at his rooms at the " Old Swan," where he was carefully tended by Mrs. Mackenzie's family, but on a second and more serious relapse he was taken by Dr. Mackenzie and Dr. Gibbon Carter to Duncan's Lodge, where during some days his life was in imminent danger. Assiduous attention saved him, but it was the opinion of the physicians that another such attack would prove fatal. This they told him, warning him seriously of the danger. His reply was that if people would not tempt him, he would not fall. Dr. Carter relates how, on

this occasion, he had a long conversation with him, in which Poe expressed the most earnest desire to break from the thralldom of his besetting sin, and told of his many unavailing struggles to do so. He was moved even to tears, and finally declared, in the most solemn manner, that this time he *would* restrain himself,—*would* withstand any temptation. He kept his word as long as he remained in Richmond; but for those who thereafter placed the stumbling-block in the way of the unsteady feet, what shall be said?

Among the warmest of his personal friends at this time, and those whom he most frequently visited, were Dr. Robert G. Cabell, Mrs. Julia Mayo Cabell, Mrs. Chevalie, and Mr. Robert Sully, and his venerable mother and accomplished sisters. These had all known him in his boyhood, and he expressed to me with earnestness the pleasure of the hours spent with them in their own homes. Especially did he enjoy his visits to the Sullys, "where" said he, "I always find pictures, flowers, delightful music and conversation, and a kindness more refreshing than all."

The only occasion on which I saw Poe really sad or depressed, was on a walk to the "Hermitage," the old deserted seat of the Mayo family, where he had, in his youth, been a frequent visitor. On reaching the place, our party separated, and Poe and myself strolled slowly about the grounds. I ob-

served that he was unusually silent and preoccupied, and, attributing it to the influence of memories associated with the place, forbore to interrupt him. He passed slowly by the mossy bench called the "lovers' seat," beneath two aged trees, and remarked, as we turned toward the garden, "There used to be white violets here." Searching amid the tangled wilderness of shrubs, we found a few late blossoms, some of which he placed carefully between the leaves of a note-book. Entering the deserted house, he passed from room to room, with a grave, abstracted look, and removed his hat, as if involuntarily, on entering the saloon, where in old times many a brilliant company had assembled. Seated in one of the deep windows, over which now grew masses of ivy, his memory must have borne him back to former scenes, for he repeated the familiar lines of Moore :

" I feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted "—

and paused, with the first expression of real sadness that I had ever seen on his face. The light of the setting sun shone through the drooping ivy-boughs into the ghostly room, and the tattered and mildewed paper-hangings, with their faded tracery of rose garlands, waved fitfully in the autumn breeze. An inexpressibly eerie feeling came over me, which I can even now recall, and, as I stood there, my old

childish idea of the poet as a spirit of mingled light and darkness, recurred strongly to my imagination. I have never forgotten that scene, or the impression of the moment.

Once in discussing "The Raven," Poe observed that he had never heard it correctly delivered by even the best readers—that is, not as he desired that it should be read. That evening, a number of visitors being present, he was requested to recite the poem, and complied. His impressive delivery held the company spell-bound, but in the midst of it, I, happening to glance toward the open window above the level roof of the green-house, beheld a group of sable faces the whites of whose eyes shone in strong relief against the surrounding darkness. These were a number of our family servants, who, having heard much talk about "Mr. Poe, the poet," and having but an imperfect idea of what a poet was, had requested permission of my brother to witness the recital. As the speaker became more impassioned and excited, more conspicuous grew the circle of white eyes, until when at length he turned suddenly toward the window, and extending his arm, cried, with awful vehemence :

" Get thee back into the tempest, and the night's
Plutonian shore !"

there was a sudden disappearance of the sable visages, a scuttling of feet, and the gallery audience

was gone. Ludicrous as was the incident, the final touch was given when at that moment Miss Poe, who was an extraordinary character in her way, sleepily entered the room, and with a dull and drowsy deliberation seated herself on her brother's knee. He had subsided from his excitement into a gloomy despair, and now, fixing his eyes upon his sister, he concluded :

“ And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting,
still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my
chamber door ;
And its eyes have all the seeming of a demon
that is dreaming——”

The effect was irresistible ; and as the final “nevermore ” was solemnly uttered the half-suppressed titter of two very young persons in a corner was responded to by a general laugh. Poe remarked quietly that on his next delivery of a public lecture he would “take Rose along, to act the part of the raven, in which she seemed born to excel.”

He was in the habit of teasing his sister, in a half-vexed, half-playful way, about her peculiarities of dress and manner. She was a very plain person, and he with his fastidious ideas could not tolerate her want of feminine tact and taste. “Rose, why do you wear your hair in that absurd style ?” “Where

did you get that extraordinary dress-pattern ? ” “ Why don't you try to behave like other people ? ” And once, when she presented herself in a particularly old-fashioned garb and coiffure, observing that she had been asleep, he replied : “ Yes, and with Rip Van Winkle, evidently. ” She took all with an easy indifference. She was very proud of her brother, and nothing that Edgar did or said could possibly be amiss.

It is with feelings of deep sadness, even after the lapse of so many years, that I approach the close of these reminiscences.

Poe one day told me that it was necessary that he should go to New York. He must make certain preparations for establishing his magazine, *The Stylus*, but he should in less than two weeks return to Richmond, where he proposed henceforth to reside. He looked forward to this arrangement with great pleasure. “ I mean to turn over a new leaf ; I shall begin to lead a new life, ” he said, confidently. He had often spoken to me of his books, — “ few, but *recherché*, ” — and he now proposed to send certain of these by express, for my perusal. “ You must annotate them extensively, ” he said. “ A book wherein the minds of the author and the reader are thus brought in contact is to me a hundred-fold increased in interest. It is like flint and steel. ” One of the books which he thus desired me to read was Mrs. Browning's poems, and another

one of Hawthorne's works. I remember his saying of the latter that he was "indisputably the best prose writer in America"; that "Irving and the rest were commonplace beside him"; and that "there was more inspiration of true genius in Hawthorne's prose than in all Longfellow's poetry." This may serve to give an idea of his own opinion of what constitutes genius, though some of Longfellow's poems he pronounced "perfect of their kind."

The evening of the day previous to that appointed for his departure from Richmond, Poe spent at my mother's. He declined to enter the parlors, where a number of visitors were assembled, saying he preferred the more quiet sitting-room; and here I had a long and almost uninterrupted conversation with him. He spoke of his future, seeming to anticipate it with an eager delight, like that of youth. He declared that the last few weeks in the society of his old and new friends had been the happiest that he had known for many years, and that when he again left New York he should there leave behind all the trouble and vexation of his past life. On no occasion had I seen him so cheerful and hopeful as on this evening. "Do you know," he inquired, "how I spent most of this morning? In writing a critique of your poems, to be accompanied by a biographical sketch. I intend it to be one of my best, and that it shall appear in the second number of *The Stylus*,"—so confident

was he in regard to this magazine. In the course of the evening he showed me a letter just received from his "friend, Dr. Griswold," in reply to one but recently written by Poe, wherein the latter had requested Dr. Griswold in case of his sudden death to become his literary executor. In this reply, Dr. Griswold accepted the proposal, expressing himself as much flattered thereby, and writing in terms of friendly warmth and interest. It will be observed that this incident is a contradiction of his statement that previous to Poe's death he had had no intimation of the latter's intention of appointing him his literary executor.

In speaking of his own writings Poe expressed his conviction that he had written his best poems, but that in prose he might yet surpass what he had already accomplished. He admitted that much which he had said in praise of certain writers was not the genuine expression of his opinions. Before my acquaintance with him I had read his critique on Mrs. Osgood, in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and had in my turn criticised the article, writing my remarks freely on the margin of the magazine. I especially disagreed with him in his estimate of the lines on Fanny Elssler and "Fanny's Error,"—ridiculing his suggested amendment of the latter. This copy of the magazine Mrs. Mackenzie afterward showed to Poe, and upon my expressing consternation thereat, she remarked laughingly :

“Don't be frightened ; Edgar was delighted.” On this evening he alluded to the subject, saying : “ I am delighted to find you so truly critical ; your opinions are really the counterpart of my own.” I was naturally surprised, when he added : “ You must not judge of me by what you find me saying in the magazines. Such expressions of opinion are necessarily modified by a thousand circumstances,—the wishes of editors, personal friendship, etc.” When I expressed surprise at his high estimate of a certain lady writer, he said : “ It is true, she is really commonplace, but her husband was kind to me ” ; and added, “ I cannot point an arrow against any woman.”

Poe expressed great regret in being compelled to leave Richmond, on even so brief an absence. He would certainly, he said, be back in two weeks. He thanked my mother with graceful courtesy and warmth for her kindness and hospitality ; and begged that we would write to him in New York, saying that it would do him good.

He was the last of the party to leave the house. We were standing on the portico, and after going a few steps he paused, turned, and again lifted his hat, in a last adieu. At that moment, a brilliant meteor appeared in the sky directly over his head, and vanished in the east. We commented laughingly upon the incident ; but I remembered it sadly afterward.

That night he spent at Duncan's Lodge ; and as his friend said, sat late at his window, meditatively smoking and seemingly disinclined for conversation. On the following morning he went into the city, accompanied by his friends, Dr. Gibbon Carter and Dr. Mackenzie. The day was passed with them and others of his intimate friends. Late in the evening he entered the office of Dr. John Carter, and spent an hour in looking over the day's papers ; then taking Dr. Carter's cane he went out, remarking that he would step across to Saddler's (a fashionable restaurant) and get supper. From the circumstance of his taking the cane, leaving his own in its place, it is probable that he had intended to return ; but at the restaurant he met with some acquaintances who detained him until late, and then accompanied him to the Baltimore boat. According to their account he was quite sober and cheerful to the last, remarking, as he took leave of them, that he would soon be in Richmond again.

On this evening I had been summoned to see a friend who was dangerously ill. On the way I was met by Miss Poe, who delivered a note left for me by her brother, containing a MS. copy of "Annie,"—a poem then almost unknown, and which I had expressed a wish to see. These strange prophetic lines I read at midnight, while the lifeless body of my friend lay in an adjoining

chamber, and the awful shadow of death weighed almost forebodingly upon my spirit. Three days after, a friend came to me with the day's issue of the *Richmond Dispatch*. Without a word she pointed to a particular paragraph, where I read,—“Death of Edgar A. Poe, in Baltimore.”

Poe had made himself popular in Richmond. People had become interested in him, and his death cast a universal gloom over the city. His old friends, and even those more recently formed, and whom he had strangely attached to himself, deeply regretted him. Mr. Sully came to consult with me about a picture of “The Raven” which he intended to make; and in the course of conversation expressed himself in regard to his lost friend with a warmth of feeling and appreciation not usual to him. The two had been school-mates; and the artist said: “Poe was one of the most warm-hearted and generous of men. In his youth and prosperity, when admired and looked up to by all his companions, he invariably stood by me and took my part. I was a dull boy at learning and Edgar never grudged time or pains in assisting me.” In further speaking he said, with a decision and earnestness which impressed me: “It was Mr. Allan's cruelty in casting him upon the world, a beggar, which ruined Poe. Some who had envied him took advantage of his change of fortune to slight and insult him. He was sensitive and proud,

and felt the change keenly. It was this which embittered him. By nature no person was less inclined to reserve or bitterness, and as a boy he was frank and generous to a fault." In speaking of his poems, Mr. Sully remarked : "He has an eye for dramatic, but not for scenic or artistic, effect. Except in 'The Raven' I can nowhere in his poems find a subject for a picture."

On some future occasion I may speak further of Poe, and give some details which will clear up certain obscurities of his life. At present, there is one point connected with his history which I feel that I cannot in justice pass over, because upon it has hung the darkest and most undeserved calumny which has overshadowed his name. I allude to the cause of the estrangement and separation between himself and Mr. Allan.

For obvious reasons, I prefer, at present, not to speak in detail upon this subject. It will be sufficient to state that the affair was simply a "family quarrel," which was not in the first instance the fault of Poe ; that he received extreme provocation and insult, and that of all the parties concerned, it appears that he was the least culpable and the most wronged. Mr. Allan, though a kind-hearted and benevolent man, was quick-tempered and irascible, and in the heat of sudden anger treated Poe with a severity which he afterward regretted. In any event, his conduct in utterly casting off one whom

he had brought up as a son, and had by education and mode of life made dependent on him, must ever, in the opinion of just-minded persons, detract from if not wholly outweigh the merit of former kindness. But the saddest part of the story is, that long after this, Poe, who never cherished resentments, being informed that his former guardian was ill and had spoken kindly of and had expressed a wish to see him, went to Mr. Allan's house, and there vainly sought an interview with him,—and that of this the latter was never informed, but died without seeing him ; and as Dr. Griswold with unwitting significance observes, “without leaving Poe a mill of his money.”

This is the simple truth of the story to which Dr. Griswold has attached a “blackness of horror” before the unrevealed mystery of which the mind shrinks aghast. As to my authority in making this statement, I will only say that I have heard the facts asserted by venerable ladies of Richmond, who were fully acquainted with the circumstances at the time of their occurrence.

In closing these reminiscences, I may be allowed to make a few remarks founded upon my actual personal knowledge of Poe, in at least the phase of character in which he appeared to me. What he may have been to his ordinary associates, or to the world at large, I do not know ; and in the picture presented us by Dr. Griswold,—half maniac, half

demon,—I confess, I cannot recognize a trait of the gentle, grateful, warm-hearted man whom I saw amid his friends,—his care-worn face all aglow with generous feeling in the kindness and appreciation to which he was so little accustomed. His faults were sufficiently apparent ; but for these a more than ordinary allowance should be made, in consideration of the unfavorable influences surrounding him from his very birth. He was ever the sport of an adverse fortune. Born in penury, reared in affluence, treated at one time with pernicious indulgence and then literally turned into the streets, a beggar and an outcast, deserted by those who had formerly courted him, maliciously calumniated, smarting always under a sense of wrong and injustice,—what wonder that his bright, warm, and naturally generous and genial nature should have become embittered ? What wonder that his keenly sensitive and susceptible poetic temperament should have become jarred, out of tune, and into harsh discord with himself and mankind ? Let the just and the generous pause before they judge ; and upon their lips the breath of condemnation will soften into a sigh of sympathy and regret.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

Sketch of Miss Martineau's household, by Charlotte Brontë—James Payn's reminiscences.

IN a preceding chapter Miss Martineau's impressions of Charlotte Brontë have been given; here, to offset them, are Miss Brontë's impressions of Harriet Martineau, written in a letter to one of her friends at the time of the visit recorded in Miss Martineau's reminiscences, November, 1850. (Following this letter is a short paper of reminiscences contributed by James Payn, the novelist, to *Harper's Monthly*.)

I am at Miss Martineau's for a week. Her house is very pleasant, both within and without; arranged at all points with admirable neatness and comfort. Her visitors enjoy the most perfect liberty; what she claims for herself she allows them. I rise at my own hour, breakfast alone (she is up at five, takes a cold bath, and a walk by starlight, and has finished breakfast and got to her work by seven

o'clock). I pass the morning in the drawing-room—she, in her study. At two o'clock we meet—work, talk, and walk together till five, her dinner hour, spend the evening together, when she converses fluently and abundantly, and with the most complete frankness. I go to my own room after ten,—she sits up writing letters till twelve. She appears exhaustless in strength and spirits, and indefatigable in the faculty of labor. She is a great and good woman, of course not without peculiarities, but I have seen none as yet that annoy me. She is both hard and warm-hearted, abrupt and affectionate, liberal and despotic. I believe she is not at all conscious of her own absolutism. When I tell her of it she denies the charge warmly; then I laugh at her. I believe she almost rules Ambleside. Some of the gentry dislike her, but the lower orders have a great regard for her. She is certainly a woman of wonderful endowments, both intellectual and physical; and though I share few of her opinions, and regard her as fallible on certain points of judgment, I must still award her my sincerest esteem. The manner in which she combines the highest mental culture with the nicest discharge of feminine duties, filled me with admiration; while her affectionate kindness won my gratitude. She seems to me the benefactress of Ambleside, yet takes no sort of credit to herself for her active and indefatigable philanthropy.

JAMES PAYN'S REMINISCENCES OF HARRIET MARTINEAU.

No more gentle, kindly, and, if I may say so, "motherly" nature ever existed than that of Harriet Martineau. She delighted in children, and in the friendship of good wives and mothers; one of her chief virtues, indeed, was a simple domesticity, that gave her a wonderful charm with those who prefer true gentlewomen to literary lionesses. To my mind Harriet Martineau never seemed to greater advantage than with her knitting-needles in her hands, or, like "Sarah Battle of blessed memory," playing at "the wholesome and athletic game of cribbage," which the writer of these lines had the honor to teach her. How many a time in the summer nights have I sat with her under the porch of her beautiful cottage, looking at the moonlit mountains and the silver Rothay, which she loved so well, although she never heard its music! "It is all so beautiful," said she, on one occasion, as we looked upon this charming scene, "that I am afraid to withdraw my eyes from it, *for fear it should all melt.*" Her love of the beauties of nature was intense: as keen as her sympathy with human wrongs and struggles. It was when she had first built her lovely little home at Ambleside that the incident occurred which I think I revealed to the American public years ago, upon no such sad occasion as the

present—how, being in want of turf for her lawn, and unable to procure it, two cart-loads of that rare commodity were thrown over her wall in the night, with a few ill-spelled words to the effect that this was the gift of a poor poacher who had read her “Forest and Game-law Tales.” This instance of gratitude (albeit the man had probably stolen the turf to show it) was very dear to her, and moved her both to tears and laughter; for her sense of humor—though she always affected not to possess any, and to regret its absence—was keen enough. Perhaps she enjoyed nothing so much that arose out of her literary fame as the letter the school-boy wrote to her when she lay dangerously ill, and “The Crofton Boys” remained in consequence unfinished:

“MY DEAR MISS MARTINEAU,—I am very sorry to hear you are so bad. I hope you will get well; but I do hope, if not, that some of your family will finish ‘The Crofton Boys.’”

This notion of an hereditary taint of authorship always tickled her very heart-strings.

I remember once reading with her some good-humored raillery of the Protectionists in the *Times*—in days when the *Times* had gleams of fun in it—in which it pictured England as dependent for its supplies of corn upon “the Romans and the Colosians and the Thessalonians.” We laughed together very heartily, and she exclaimed: “Now I wish I could write like that; but I have no sense of humor.”

She was accustomed to furnish the obituary notices of eminent persons in the *Daily News*, and, very characteristically, she wrote her own, and sent it to lie in the editor's desk until the time should come for its appearance. It lies before me now, with its last touching words: "She declined throughout that and subsequent years, and died —," the blank being left for the date only. In this strange autobiographical sketch, in which the frankness of self-criticism goes beyond legitimate bounds, she says, writing of herself in the third person: "Her original power was nothing more than was due to earnestness and intellectual clearness within a certain range. With small imagination and suggestive powers, and *therefore nothing approaching to genius*, she could see clearly what she did see, and give a clear expression to what she had to say. . . . But she could neither discover nor invent." This self-depreciation is curiously and undesignedly contradicted in her account of what her writings effected. Even in so simple a matter as her "Guides to Service," suggested by the Poor-law Commissioners, with the object of training the children of the poor, this "earnestness" went so far on the road to genius as to make her identified with the "maid-of-all-work" whose mode of life she pictured. It was popularly believed that she must have been once in that situation herself, to have described it so "to the life," and she regarded the

mistake (now and then expressed to her face), as she well might, with considerable complacency. In the same hypercritical vein she underrates her capabilities for writing fiction, whereas both "Deerbrook" and "The Hour and the Man" are at least marked by force and originality of a high order. I have remarked on this self-depreciation because it ran through her character, nor do I remember in it any evidence to the contrary, except as respected her deafness. She would venture to say for herself (and with great justice) that she never allowed her misfortune to interfere with the happiness of others, as deafness too often does. One eminent literary friend of hers, and a great talker, once expressed to me his amusement at Miss Martineau having given him the address of the shop in London where she bought "all her ear-trumpets." He could not understand why she had need of their renewal. "All her ear-trumpets! Why, one would think she listened to what other people said. She could never wear *one* out with that, if she lived to be a thousand." But here he did her wrong; for though a great and good talker, Miss Martineau was always ready to listen when there was any thing worth hearing. Nay, more, she was content *not* to listen. Often have I seen her with her trumpet laid by her side and a genial smile upon her pleasant face, while conversation was going on around her in which she did not happen to be included. She was always careful not

only not to worry others with her importunity, as deaf people so often do, but to prevent others from seeing her own sense of loss.

She had a second misfortune too : her sense of taste was absent. I believe she had no sense of smell whatever ; but she told me that once, and only once, she had tasted, in all its intensity of flavor, as she imagined, a slice of a leg of mutton. It never came again, but that one experience was delicious. " I was going out to a great dinner that evening at the Marshalls', at Coniston, and I was ashamed to say how I looked forward to the dainties that would be set before me." But she never did taste them. Curiously enough, her famous neighbor, Wordsworth, was similarly afflicted as respected the sense of smell. Once only he too enjoyed it. " I once smelled a bean field," he said, " and thought it heaven."

The poet of Rydal Mount was prudent and "canny" enough to have come from even farther north than he did, and he had also "a guid conceit of himself," which he showed on one occasion to Miss Martineau naïvely enough. When she first came into the Lake Country, and before she showed any strong signs of heterodoxy, he took much personal interest in her, and favored her with his paternal advice. " Now, my dear Miss Martineau, there is one trouble here all the summer : the tourists. Of course you will not suffer from it as much as I do ;

but that is a question of degree. If people have letters of introduction, give them tea ; but as for meat and such like, let them go to their inns, or you will be eaten out of house and home." All these stories she told with inimitable humor, and yet it was her whim, as I have said, to consider that she had no sense of fun. I believe this arose from her not being able, as she confessed to me, to appreciate certain books that are supposed to be very humorous, and especially "Tom Jones." Even making allowance for a natural feminine dislike to its coarseness, the book was distasteful to her in every way. She could see nothing laudable in it, and, with characteristic humility, she set down her want of appreciation to her own mental shortcomings.

I was a very young man when I had first the pleasure of Miss Martineau's acquaintance which was made in an unusually agreeable way. I had just written a volume of poems which my friends thought more highly of than the world in general, and among others Mary Russell Mitford, of Swallowfield. I was going up to the lakes to spend my college vacation, and the authoress of "Our Village" was so good as to give me a line of introduction to her sister authoress. "You will find her very nice," she said, "and she is a very clever woman, though her works will not outlive her." On the other hand, Miss Martineau remarked to me of Miss Mitford's works, that "one

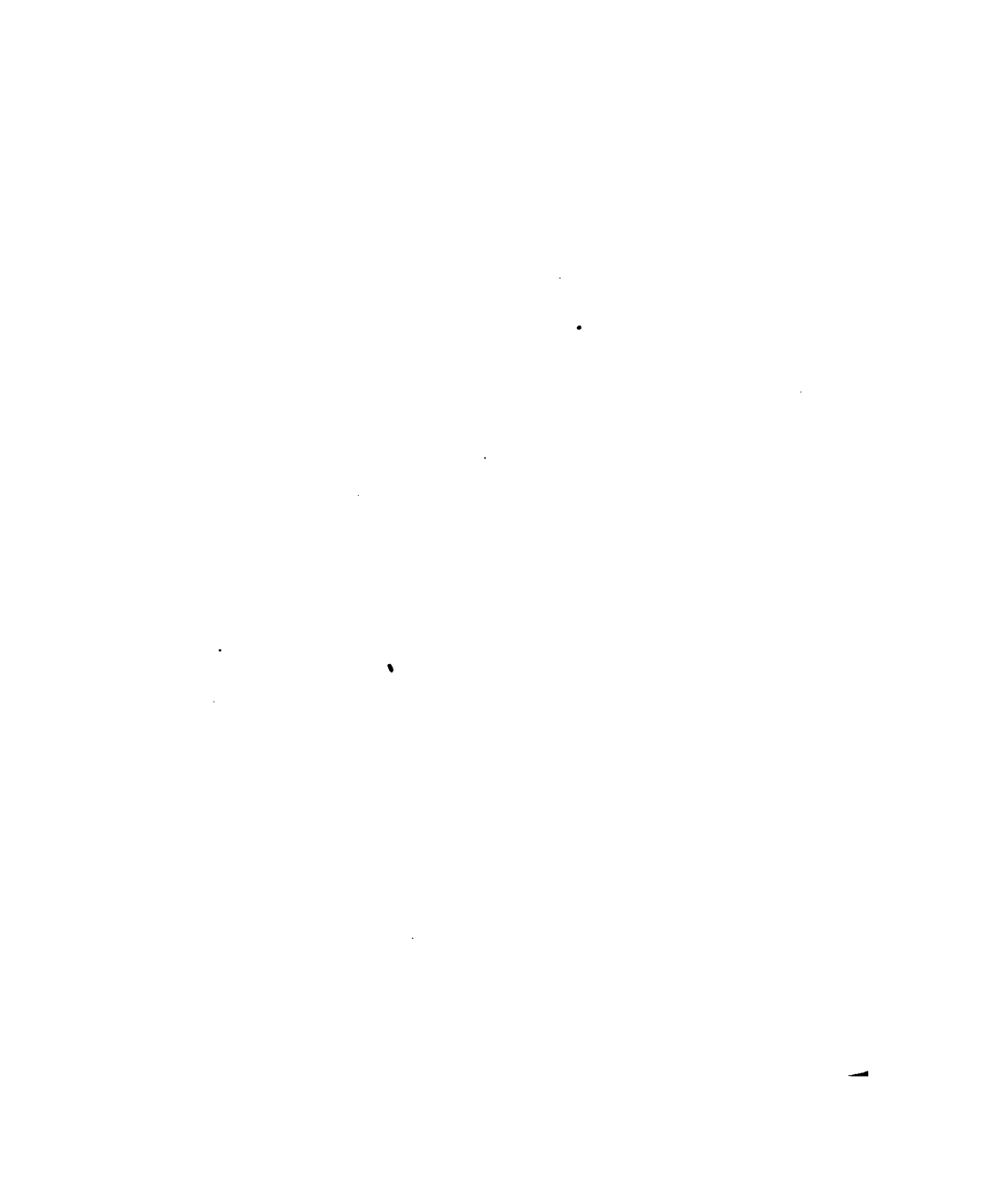
likes them much better than one's judgment approves of them." At that time, in my juvenile cynicism, I snickered at these literary ladies who thus estimated each other's value at so moderate a figure ; but, after all, Miss Mitford said of her rival, with whose theories and views of life in general she could certainly have entertained no sort of sympathy, no worse, as we have seen, than that rival said of herself, while Miss Martineau's criticism on Miss Mitford was not only eminently correct, but, when one comes to think of it, exceedingly eulogistic. These two ladies had, indeed, notwithstanding all differences of style and taste, a hearty respect for one another, and I got the benefit of it. I was received at "The Knoll" with a hospitality that was much in the teeth of Mr. Wordsworth's advice, and commenced a friendship that endured until her death, and which will be something more and deeper than a mere pride or boast to me as long as I live.

Miss Martineau was very good-natured in the reception of "good things" said at her expense. Hartley Coleridge, the ne'er-do-weel, who lived at the Nab Cottage, at Rydal, used to have her "thrown at him" a good deal, as the phrase goes ; his own idleness and indolence used to be contrasted with the vigor and vehemence of his neighbor, and he was asked why he did not follow so good an example. "Follow her?" said he. "She's a monomaniac *about every thing.*"

That verdict amused her very much, and it was to some degree a true one. Whatever Harriet Martineau took up, she did literally "with all her soul and with all her strength"; and until it was turned out of hand, complete and perfect as far as work could make it, she was a good deal wrapped up in it. And she took many things in hand. These things resolved themselves mainly into two grand objects—the improvement of the position of the poor, and the elevation of public thought: her private conduct and character were in accordance with these high aspirations. She has probably left as many personal friends—real friends—behind her as any woman who ever lived, for she was the guide and comforter of very many. Though her physical ear was closed, her spiritual ear was ever open to the appeal of a fellow-creature. The young and the unknown found in her an adviser and a helper on the same path which she had herself trodden so successfully. She did not say, as the small-great are so prone to do: "*I* climbed the hill, but you are not strong enough; be content with the valley." If she saw promise, she did not cut it in the bud, but fostered it.

Though "twenty thousand colleges should thunder anathemas" at the memory of Harriet Martineau, it will keep sweet and pure in all hearts that knew her, and those hearts are among the best that beat in her fellow-countrymen and fellow-countrywomen.









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